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Betrayal in the Promised Land

Nicholas Lemann's Liberal History of the Great Black Migration

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What are the facts?

■ The concept of "land for peace" is a totally new one in the history of the world. It was formulated for one specific purpose only, namely to persuade and pressure Israel to give up territories that it has administered since the Six-Day War of 1967. By its victory in that war, Israel wound up in possession of these territories. Contrary to what many are led to believe, the "West Bank," the focus of today's attention, had never been part of any Arab country. It was part of Palestine, a territorial unit that, by the Mandate of the League of Nations and in line with the Balfour Declaration, had been designated as a national home for the Jewish people.

■ Thus, while the concept of "land for peace" is a brand-new one, the concept that to the victor belong the spoils is as old as history itself and had really never been questioned before the days of the Israel-Arab conflict. Our own country, of course, following its Manifest Destiny, has benefited greatly and has consolidated its territory by applying this motto. But Israel followed a different path. From the day of victory in 1967, it waited for an offer of peace from the Arabs. But that offer never came. Instead, immediately following the war, the Arabs pronounced their three unalterable "no's:" no recognition, no negotiation, and no peace with Israel.

■ In 1977, President Sadat of Egypt traveled to Jerusalem and presented a peace plan to the Israeli government. The Israelis eagerly embraced his suggestion. In exchange for peace and normalization of relations with its neighbor, Israel returned to Egypt the vast Sinai peninsula, together with the city of Yamit; some of the most advanced military installations in the world; the port and naval installations of Sharm-el-Sheik, which safeguard Israel's access to its port of Eilat; and the oil fields that Israel had developed and which had made Israel self-sufficient in its energy requirements. And, of course, Israel also gave up the natural buffer against aggression that the Suez Canal and the strategic depth of the Sinai itself provided. It was a first in history. Never before in the chronicle of mankind had the victor returned conquered territory to the vanquished in order to attain peace.

■ One would expect that the concept of "land for peace" would work both ways. After all, should not the Arabs also make some territorial sacrifices for peace? Unfortunately, that is not the case. Every inch of land held by the Arabs is considered "holy Arab soil" and its possession by the "infidels" (Christians or Jews) is inadmissible, intolerable, a blasphemy and a case for "jihad" (holy war). No compromise, no concession is ever possible. The way the "Taba issue" was finally resolved further illustrates the Arab belief that the "land for peace" principle is basically a one-way street.

■ The "land for peace" formulation is now applied mostly to the Judea and Samaria (the "West Bank") and Gaza regions. Israel's foes, but also some of its friends, urge Israel to yield these regions to the Arabs, in exchange for "peace." But there is no peace, and no peace will come about by Israel's giving up this area of vital strategic importance to those who are its sworn enemies and who have declared over and over again that they wish to use this land as their launching pad for the final attempt at the destruction of Israel. The conflict in the area is not only between Israel and the "Palestinians." It is first of all between Israel and the Arab nations. With the single exception of Egypt, virtually all of them are still in a state of war with Israel.

To none of the Arab countries has the possibility ever occurred of *their* trading land for peace, for instance yielding the "West Bank" to Israel for the sake of peace. Not one of these countries has even hinted that they would make peace with Israel if Israel yielded the administered territories to the Arabs. There isn't even a gesture of accommodation, such as a lifting of the over 40-year-old Arab economic boycott against Israel, an apology for the odious slander that Zionism is Racism, or a discontinuation of the yearly charade in the United Nations, in which the Arab states attempt to expel Israel from that body. For the victor to yield land for peace to the vanquished is a new idea—who knows, it might even be a good one. But it surely would have to work both ways in order to be valid and effective.

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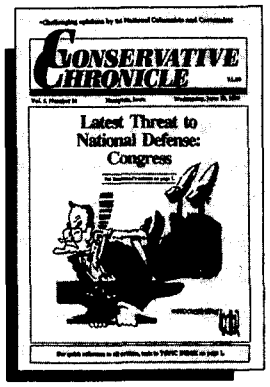

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THE CONTINUING CRISIS

• April is gone but not Saddam Hussein, the high-tech Idi Amin of the 1990s, whose vast programs for population control have markedly thinned out Iraq's Kurdish and Shi'ite populations and cut much of the fat from that vast war machine of his. Until very recently it was held in the highest esteem by irenic Liberals and by Mr. Tom Bethell and Mr. Joe Sobran, all of whom once admonished that Saddam's legions would butcher the allies with the utmost exuberance and loss of life. Now that Saddam's army has rid itself of the least fit and improved its marksmanship by shooting long columns of civilians in the back, Saddam will be the Saladin of the modern era—though the first Saladin was, if memory serves, a Kurd.

• In Johannesburg, South Africa, the tony Die Afrikaner Klub is apparently proceeding with plans to hold history's first giraffe barbecue, despite nitpicking from adherents of the *soi-disant* animal rights movement and from assorted nutritionists and vegetarians. Mr. Charles Harper, chairman of the Klub, says that ticket sales are brisk for the feast that will ensue after a 2,800-pound giraffe is roasted to perfection on a six-yard-long spit. Cookouts, or "braais" as the South Africans call them, are immensely popular, particularly among Afrikaners. Yet some South Africans still deprecate barbecuing animals and would be much happier if Mr. Harper would forsake his giraffe barbecue for something more civilized, perhaps barbecued head of lettuce or barbecued grasshopper. In the words of Miss Christine Berry, the toothsome representative of Beauty Without Cruelty, "It is extremely barbaric to stick a giraffe on a spit [as against a succulent head of lettuce or a delicious grasshopper]. . . . It totally devalues wildlife."

• Whilst wildlife is on the mind, on April 1 a pillar of Palm Beach society reported that she had been sexually violated at the Kennedy mansion, and she had removed one of the famed Kennedy urns to prove it. Throughout the month the story remained obnubilated in rumor and arcana. There were reports that Senator Edward M. Kennedy, the women's rights stalwart on the Senate judiciary committee, and two male relatives besought the company of several nocturnal cuties in a nightclub on Good Friday night and invited them home for early-morning sport. ("A traditional Easter weekend," the unflappable senator later described it in his only public reference to the saturnalia.) Luck was with them and the wild life began, culminating in one of the girls suffering a broken rib and unwanted affections while another sighted Senator Kennedy's genitalia heading her way beneath the senator's button-down Oxford cloth shirt and grinning visage. She lit out for home, unassisted by the senator, thus proving that history remains a great teacher. Even drunk, Senator Kennedy's admirers now know better than to ask him for a ride home.

• Mr. Dwight Gooden signed a three-year contract with the New York Mets for $15.45 million, demonstrating, alas, that the 1980s are not over yet. American adepts of progressive thought whose path has not been easy what with socialism's worldwide eclipse and the free market's resurgence, were given cause to exult when the Communist party won Albania's first free election ever. That youthful German aviator who, in 1987, landed a single-engine plane in Red Square despite strict Soviet laws protecting the rights of pedestrians faces incarceration once again. According to the *Washington Post*, Herr Mathias Rust was sentenced to two and one half years in prison for the 1989 stabbing of a student nurse who spurned his attempt to kiss her "in a hospital locker room"—a widely used German euphemism for obscure anatomical parts not approachable in conventional German social contact.

• On April 8, British Prime Minister John Major roused the allies to create in northern Iraq a "protected zone" for Kurdish refugees, and three days later President Bush promulgated a four-point plan to assist the Kurds. The political talents of Michael Dukakis have not gone unrewarded. He has been made visiting professor of political science at the University of Hawaii, after which he can be shoved off on the University of Buta Ritari in the Gilbert Islands, and then the University of Taongi Atoll, and forget not the University of Tuamotu Archipelago including Puka-Puka, and on to Disappointment Island (Longitude 140°, Latitude 15°), thence to the University of Melbourne. The citizens of Massachusetts may never have to hear his constipated pronouncements ever again or bear his insufferable wife. On April 18, the 1991 Alexander Onassis Award for Man and Society was conferred upon the worthy coco of Mr. Jimmy Carter, in recognition of his knack for playing the international goody-goody and for his legendary "peaceful resolution" of conflict—an obscure reference that, but possibly the Greeks expected him to be implicated in a *coup d'état* sometime in the 1980s. Certainly that would be understandable if the Greeks had been following American publishing events; April brought the publication of choice Reagan biographies by Miss Kitty Kelley and by Mr. Lou Cannon, both affirming to the solemn approbation of reviewers that the Reagans were aplaustic nincompoops and that Ronald Reagan was an even worse President than Warren Gamaliel Harding. The Cold War's passing, the 1980s' prosperity, the unification of Germany, world-wide adoption of many American values, and the resurrection of the United States as the world's preeminent power were pure coincidence.

• At scandal-ridden Stanford University where President Donald Kennedy still rules through his network of thought patrollers and bully boys, the authorities have successfully conducted an experiment on live students to ascertain whether two students of the opposite sex (male and female) could cohabit in the same dormitory room "platonically," which is to say, forgoing both sexual congress and acts of homicide. The experiment was part of Stanford's "Gender Exploration Week," and according to the testimony of one participant, Miss Valerie Paz Soldan, 21, "a lot of people found it very fun." Actually, Miss Soldan could have had more fun in the Macomb County Jail in Mount Clemens, Michigan, where "Gender Exploration Week" was observed with a bit more intellectual rigor. There in the Macomb County Jail, eight male inmates secreted themselves in the jail's female section and availed themselves of the open arms of eight willing female inmates. "There's no question they had sex," declared Sheriff William H. Hackel, having inspected his smiling charges. "It was consensual," he added—a discovery certain to perplex the asexual authors of Stanford's "Gender Exploration Week."

• In consumer news, expect Mr. Ralph Nader to marshal a whole army of his trial lawyers to the defense of Mr. Robert Martinique, whose defective penile implant might explode at any minute. Mr. Martinique testified in Fort Lauderdale that, soon after Dr. Ran Abrahamy operated on him in 1987, he discovered that it was an inch too large (9.2 inches) and began to bend. The distraught Mr. Martinique brought his problem to a New Jersey urologist who called in an associate and said, "Oh, my God, look at this." To a visibly distressed courtroom Mr. Martinique further testified that his urologist believed that his

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penile implant, under certain circumstances, could explode. The trial continues. President George Bush unveiled a get-tough plan for improving American education, but it fell far below the standards set by Mr. William Slagle, the debate coach at Samford University in Columbiana, Alabama, who was sentenced to life imprisonment for killing a student who had failed to prepare adequately for a competition. Mr. George Foreman stayed upright for 12 rounds in a decision that went to heavyweight champion Mr. Evander Holyfield. The baneful effects of the Ayatollah Khomeini on a happy marriage were manifest when the wife of Salman Rushdie announced her plan to divorce her reclusive husband.

• Early in the month, word of a dangerous new right-wing group chilled the hearts of enlightened Americans everywhere when it was announced that America's 69 million bowlers were throwing their support behind scholarships for children who lost a parent in the recent "One Hundred Hours War." More information can be had by contacting the militantly named Bowlers Victory Legion in our nation's capital.

Finally the laugh is on Oprah. The winner of an Oprah Winfrey look-alike contest sponsored by the *Ladies' Home Journal* is Miss Jecquin Stitt, a worker at the Flint, Michigan, water department and a patient in the midst of a sex-change, which does not speak well of Miss Winfrey's pulchritude, though it does suggest that the world is as weird as her show. *—RET*

CORRESPONDENCE

An Evolving Controversy

After reading the letters by R. Thomas Boyd and Michael J. Cakora in the April issue [in response to Terry Eastland's article, "*Scientific American* on Trial," *TAS*, February 1991], I feel constrained to get the record straight on the theory (better hypothesis) of evolution. Both men wrote from the typical pro-evolution point of view, which misrepresents some very important facts.

First of all, Professor Boyd cites "literally thousands of publications," and Mr. Cakora mentions "consistent observation and inferences by the thousands" as evidence for the "fact of evolution." Truthfully, though, *none* of the observations and inferences immortalized in "literally thousands of publications" *proves* evolution. If they did, either singularly or *in toto*, there would be no debate (or, as Mr. Cakora prefers, "dispute"). These observations, etc. are merely *conformable* with evolution. That is, they appear to fit in with the idea rather than to refute it, so they are considered to be publishable. . . .

This being the case, it is obvious that there is no such thing as a scientific "fact of evolution," i.e., one that has been demonstrated repeatedly by experiment or by incontrovertible observation. What we have is a *philosophic* fact of evolution. . . .

The idea that evolution has been proved by large numbers of measurements or publications is a full-fledged *non-sequitur*, but is believed by many laymen because of their confidence that anything scientists believe must therefore be scientific. This may be the case with Mr. Cakora. Professor Boyd, I suspect, is in the condition of most scientist-evolutionists, who have never themselves proved evolution to have taken place but who feel sure that *someone* has. The difficulty is that *no one* has.

In 1972, Francis Crick, America's Mr. DNA, admitted that the fabric of the earth contained too little molybdenum to drive the kind of molecular changes needed for evolution to have taken place. However, because he was a believer in evolution, he took refuge in the idea of infinite regression. He joined the ranks of those whose faith rests in "panspermianism" (the idea that life, at least in some rudimentary form, exists in many places throughout the universe) and insisted that the evolution of life from non-living matter really did take place, though it must have happened on some other planet. The living forms then were introduced to earth from outside.

. . . How evolution might have proceeded once it was well underway also has the faithful puzzled. They are so puzzled, in fact, by the obvious impossibility of Darwinian "gradualism" and by the harmful accompaniments of mutation that Stephen Jay Gould, cited by Mr. Cakora and widely recognized as one of the nabobs of the evolutionary philosophy, has felt it necessary to come up with an alternative explanation. Gould's idea, known as "punctuated equilibrium," hypothesizes the existence of extremely dense breeding populations among which big changes took place in a relatively short time, interspersed with long ages of stasis. While this idea would overcome the weaknesses of "gradualism," no one as yet has discovered evidence of one of Gould's dense breeding populations.

Crick and Gould are not the only famous evolutionists to find the questions about orthodox Darwinism hard to live with. . . . Sir Fred Hoyle, astronomical theorist and scientific gadfly, also gave up his Darwinism for panspermianism in 1982, when he co-authored *Evolution from Space*. He followed the implications of statistical probability to the conclusion that there just has not been enough time in earth's geological history for the amount of change necessary to bring us to our present complexity of life forms.

A different approach was taken by Dean Kenyon, one of the originators of the theory of biochemical determinism, which is now probably the most popular idea of how evolution might have been driven. Kenyon seems to have become disenchanted with the whole state of evolutionary thought and to have lapsed to being what might be called a "pure" creationist. His colleagues in the biology department at San Francisco State University were so shocked and outraged by his departure from the faith that they refused to let him continue to teach their course in evolution. (As well they should, Mr. Cakora might say. "Is not such a conscious disregard for the truth irrational?")

Honesty at the expense of oneself or one's philosophy is as rare a thing in the scientific world as it is everywhere else, but one noted evolutionist, G. A. Kerkut, made this revealing admission in his 1961 book, *Implications of Evolution*: " . . . there is the theory that all living forms in the world have arisen from a single source which itself came from an inorganic form. This theory can be called the 'General Theory of Evolution' and the evidence that supports it is not sufficiently strong to allow us to consider it as anything more than a working hypothesis."

Other, similar declarations have been made since, but none, I think, is more revealing. *—Philip E. Isett, Ph.D.*
Edmond, Oklahoma

Contrary to the assertions of Mssrs. Boyd and Cakora, Mr. Eastland's assessment of the Piel-Mims affair at *Scientific American* and, in the broader picture, the self-image of science today, was not inaccurate.

Two hundred and fifty years ago, convincing evidence had been amassed for the existence of a satellite of Venus (it was actually a combination of optical illusion and aberrations). One hundred and fifty years ago, scientific norms included the concept of spontaneous generation of life. Fifty years ago the steady state of the universe was preferred by leading cosmologists. Ten years ago, *Australopithecus afarensis* ("Lucy") had closed the book on the candidate for the first man.

Science has indeed corrected itself in these cases, but I'm afraid that the objectivity which permitted and encouraged this correction is giving way to a quasi-religious dogmatism. A small example of this type of thinking occurred a couple of weeks ago, when I was discussing the Mims business with a physician who also holds a Ph.D. in physics from Berkeley. He maintained that Mr. Mims should not have gotten the job, because a person who still interpreted Genesis literally had shown a non-scientific thinking which must color his professional behavior. When asked if he would also deny the post to a Marxist—whose philosophy would certainly demand more than an economic application only—he demurred.

As to whether scientific men may also be orthodox Christians while dismissing scripture as something less than truth—even as cleverly devised fables (2 Pet. 1:16)—is another question which could stand some objective treatment.

—Eric Rachut, M.D.
Laboratory Director
St. Olaf Hospital
Austin, Minnesota

Michael J. Cakora is mistaken when he says the Catholic Church does not believe in the inerrancy of the Scriptures. It does indeed believe that the Scriptures are inerrant. The Council of Trent (1545-63) attested the inerrancy in unmistakable terms. And it was echoed in the encyclical letters *Providentissimus Deus* of Leo XIII (1893) and *Spiritus Paraclitus* of Benedict XV (1920), to mention a few sources.

What the Catholic Church does believe is that the Bible is not always to be taken literally, particularly in the Old Testament, which is not a modern form of scientific historical narrative but rather a series of narratives which "relate in simple and figurative language, adapted to the intelligence of less educated men, the fundamental truths underlying the divine plan of salvation." (Letter of the Biblical Commission, 1948)

As for evolution's being "as well established as our planet's shape and position," Dr. Michael Denton, a molecular biologist, devoted an entire scholarly treatise, *Evolution: A Theory in Crisis*, to the considerable array of scientific evidence that challenges evolutionary assumptions.

—Ray Hutchinson
La Jolla, California

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EDITORIALS

OPERATION HAMILL-LEWIS

by R. Emmett Tyrrell, Jr.

How is it that those commentators and politicians who so recently opposed the use of American force against Saddam Hussein now insist on its use to protect Saddam's Kurdish and Shi'ite victims? Well, so reflexive are some of these detractors in opposing George Bush that they do not notice the impudence of their hypocrisy.

For a commentator like William Safire to favor continued American military intervention on behalf of Saddam's latest victims is neither inconsistent nor hypocritical. After all, he was a stalwart member of our little band of saber-rattlers. Without relishing war we recognized Saddam as a threat to American national interests and advised military action. We were outnumbered among commentators and by the Democrats on the left, but experience counseled us that military intervention against Saddam was necessary and likely to be short and sweet.

I do not recall Senator Edward Kennedy being with us, and you can bet the farm that neither columnists Anthony Lewis in the *New York Times* nor Pete Hamill in the *New York Post* favored force of arms in the Middle East. The only place these worthies would send in the troops would be Wall Street to wipe out the sanctuaries of "white collar crime" or some hellish all-male social club so that the sexes might be integrated and cigar smoke banished. One of the peculiarities of the Liberal mind is that, though it has no qualms about bringing down the full force of the state on generally law-abiding citizens who run athwart some esoteric government regulation, it is extremely reluctant to call in the cops when brutal crimes are being committed or the military when tyrants threaten world peace.

And so now Senator Kennedy chides the Bush Administration for the plight of Iraq's refugees and apparently wants our military involved in Iraq's civil war. Columnists and cartoonists follow Hamill's lead in composing dithyrambs that blame the administration for being insufficiently harsh towards Saddam. The morally superior Anthony Lewis, who has been unfailingly wrong about all the major themes of recent decades, declares that the President lacks "an empathy gene" and cannot feel "the pain of other human beings." Hamill throws in some idiotic non sequiturs attempting to connect our successful military campaign in Iraq with the urban problems of New York City, a city whose laws and rituals conform more closely to the Liberal bugaboos of a Hamill or a Lewis than almost any other city in America.

To write the hypocritical solemnities of these columnists it helps to be a historical illiterate. Actually, the aftermath of the Gulf War is not unusual. When wars end there are refugees and there is partisan warfare. Perhaps the administration ended hostilities a few hours too early. Certainly the administration should have grounded all Iraq's air support for its units fighting Kurds and Shi'ites. But the United States is right to avoid involvement in an Iraqi civil war that might leave us in the undesirable role of administering another Lebanon. The administration is right to recognize the interests of its friends in the region, particularly the Turks, who have faced Kurdish uprisings for decades. The major remaining business for the United States in Iraq is Saddam's removal from government and prosecution for war crimes.

The prosecution of Saddam as a war criminal is fraught with problems. The best solution is for the Iraqis to police their own government by overthrowing Saddam. Writing in the *Wall Street Journal* the other day, Fred. C. Iklé, the worldly-wise former under secretary of defense, explained how Saddam's fall might be brought about, namely through the enforcement of those United Nations resolutions that very specifically require the destruction of all Iraq's chemical and biological weapons, nuclear materials and components, and longer-range ballistic missiles. Further resolutions call for Iraq to pay reparations to the war's victims and to desist from harming refugees lest the allies renew their attack. There are timetables for implementation and there are mechanisms for monitoring compliance. President Bush must stand resolutely behind these resolutions and maintain our Air Force nearby. As for Senator Kennedy, he will bewail the fate of Saddam's victims even as he dismantles our Air Force. □

Adapted from RET's weekly Washington Post *column syndicated by King Features.*

KITTY *TIMES*

On Sunday, April 7, the *New York Times* did something quite curious. It ran a front-page news story reporting the scabrous contents of an anti-Nancy Reagan biography written by an exceptionally trashy writer, Miss Kitty Kelley. The lady is a gossipist, though you might object that she is no lady. Miss Kelley's other essays into biography have contemplated the lives of Elizabeth Taylor, Frank Sinatra, and Jacqueline Kennedy Onassis. Why did the *Times* not give these masterpieces the front-page treatment?

Some will answer that it is because Miss Kelley exposes hot stuff about the wife of a President or, as Miss Kitty would put it, a "petticoat president." If memory serves, however, Jacqueline Kennedy Onassis was also the wife of a President; and, as for the hot stuff, most of it appeared in former White House chief of staff Donald Regan's *For the Record*. No, I am afraid that the only reason this ponderous compendium of ordure received notice on the front page of the nation's newspaper of record is that the Old Order cannot get Ronald Reagan out of its mind.

And so a *Times* reporter was called in to speed-read the 600-page book and report on its fanciful revelations of Mrs. Reagan practicing the scortatory arts in the White House when Ron was away and of Ron as a rake in his early days and of Nancy ruling the White House with a "Gucci-clad fist." Within a column inch the reporter speaks of the Reagans' conducting a "desperate" campaign to improve their image and of the Reagan White House "desperately" soft-pedaling Nancy's vanities. There is indeed desperation here, but the desperation issues not from the Reagans but from those who remain so overwrought by Ronald Reagan's presidency that they will debauch the front page of one of the world's most respected newspapers.

Think of it. The *Times*'s reporters have been covering the Reagans for over a decade. Not one of its reporters has been able to uncover the Reagans acting like Palm Beach Kennedys. Not one has been able to show Nancy running national security policy. Apparently, the *Times* editors who put Miss Kelley's gossip on their front page believe that

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she is a greater reporter than any of the dozens who covered Washington for the *Times* during the Reagan era. Doubtless the *Times* will soon be offering Miss Kelley a position, and why not an editorship? She has triumphed where its Washington editors have failed.

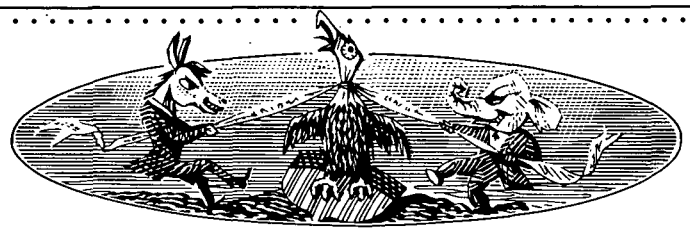
The obsession with Ronald Reagan and his wife, continuing as it does three years after his retirement, is bizarre. No other recent President, successful or unsuccessful, has caused such a mania except Franklin Roosevelt, and then only among hardened right-wingers on the peripheries of politics. But then what other President aside from Roosevelt achieved so much in this century?

Speaking in Washington in early March, former British Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher reminded us once again of precisely what the Reagan achievement was. "In the decade of the 1980s," she declared, "Western values were placed in the crucible and they emerged with greater purity and strength. . . . So much of the credit goes to President Reagan. Of him it can be said, as Canning said of Pitt, that he was the 'pilot that weathered the storm.' The world owes him an enormous debt and it saddens me that there are some who refuse to acknowledge his achievements."

Then Mrs. Thatcher elucidated some of those achievements: "The Cold War was won without a shot being fired; Eastern Europe regained its freedom . . . ; the Berlin Wall came down and Germany was reunified within NATO; a weakened Soviet Union was compelled by the West's economic and military competition to reform . . . and the United States once again became the preeminent power in the world."

All that, of course, is as nothing if a gossipist can be found to utter unsubstantiated luridities about the President's wife. But a gossipist is by nature a mountebank. The book is snake oil. Even in her acknowledgments the gossipist misleads. She lists scores of public figures who she says took "time to answer questions and share their stories." One name on the list is mine. I refused to see her. Other names on the list are those of the journalist Fred Barnes and the historian Kenneth Lynn. They refused her too. And none of us accepted an offer to have sex with her. Pass it on. □

CAPITOL IDEAS



ORIGINAL SIN IN THE PROMISED LAND

by Tom Bethell

Bill Russell lives on the edge of the French Quarter, so when I left his apartment one night recently, you can be sure that I kept my eyes peeled. It's not true, as Harry McPherson wrote in reviewing Nicholas Lemann's book *The Promised Land*, that with the black underclass "mired in poverty," the rest of the population "averts its eyes." No, Harry, we keep our eyes peeled—unless of course we live in a nice safe neighborhood where we don't have to worry about such mundane matters as personal safety.

Large areas of New Orleans are now less safe than they were in the 1970s, when I lived there, including the French Quarter at night. The uptown area near Tulane, where Nick Lemann himself grew up, is by no means safe. One evening I had dinner with a couple who live there, and they mentioned the private security patrols now routinely hired to supplement police protection in the area. Liberals are learning about such matters as the "free rider problem," referring to residents who won't pay for the added protection but benefit from it anyway.

I started out in journalism in New Orleans, working for a weekly called the *Vieux Carre Courier*. One day Nick Lemann came into the office with a feature that he had written on his own initiative, comparing the local prep schools. The amazing thing was that Nick was still in high school himself. He did more pieces for the *Courier*, and he turned out to have phenomenal reportorial skills—above all, an eerie detachment from the events that he was describing. "Commitment" was not his thing. He wanted to find out what was happening and describe it in this cool, neutral style.

By the age of 18 he knew about the reporting techniques described by Tom Wolfe in his "new journalism" anthology. Nick told me once that, when in high school, he would go to the Tulane library on Saturdays to read back issues of *Esquire*, where this style of journalism was to be found. Then he went on to Harvard, where he became editor of the *Crimson*. After working for the *Washington Monthly* he joined the *Atlantic*, where parts of his book on the great black migration were published. (Some of his earlier pieces were published by Norton in a book entitled *The Fast Track*.)

The Promised Land deals with the migration of several million blacks from the rural south (Clarksdale, Mississippi, in particular) to the urban north (Chicago in particular). In the middle of the book there is an immense chapter on the evolution of a specific program known as the War on Poverty. Meanwhile the situation is deteriorating in Chicago, and by the end of the book some of those who went north have moved back to Mississippi. Here, despite much change, "King's dream has not yet quite come true for poor black people in Clarksdale," and "the social ills of the Chicago ghettos are beginning to appear in the Delta."

This is a good subject for a book, because it eludes the radar of daily journalism. It involves panoramic and slow-moving changes that are unlikely to seem newsworthy from one day to the next. It is also a difficult story, if only because of the sheer difficulty, not to say danger, of interviewing people in housing projects. Lemann must be one of very few reporters who has done this. (He told me he was advised by a tenant of the Robert Taylor Homes, a large project in Chicago, that the safe time to come was before noon, when the gangs were still sleeping it off.)

Now 36, Lemann is among the best reporters in the country today, and I will be surprised if he doesn't end up with Pulitzer Prizes on his shelf. The great reporting is still much in evidence. He knits his stories together with seamless perfection, and his narrative is as smooth as silk. But there has also been a change since I first knew him—the old detachment has gone. I can do no better than quote a *New York Times* interview with him:

> "My father is a conservative," he says, "and my mother is a liberal. So I was raised getting two different views of the world and having to square them."
>
> And how did he do that?
>
> He laughs. "I guess I'm more of the liberal bent," he says. "I vote with my mother."

"Thinking about the history of race relations can easily give rise to bitterness and fatalism," he writes, and there are traces of this in the book. He reminds us on every page of the unjust treatment received by black sharecroppers in the Mississippi Delta. Most of what he tells us is no doubt representative enough. Sometimes he seems to overdo it, however, as when he writes that "every black in Clarksdale knew" that the blues singer Bessie Smith, who died in a car crash outside Clarksdale in 1937, "had been refused admission to the county hospital on grounds of her race, at a time when she could still have been saved." (That is the Edward Albee version of her death. See "The True Death of Bessie Smith," published in *Esquire* in June 1969, for a more reliable account. The driver who came upon the scene of the accident while Bessie Smith was still lying in the road happened to be an orthopedic surgeon. He said she died an hour after being taken by ambulance to the G. T. Thomas Hospital and "didn't have a chance.")

I also wonder on what evidence Lemann discerns "the Reagan Administration's deep budget cuts in social programs"? This is wishful thinking on the part of liberals and conservatives alike, but not thereby true. In the long, central chapter on Washington we come to a real difficulty. At the beginning of the 1960s, Lemann writes, the United States "was still in a kind of moral slumber about segregation in the South," and was not yet of a mind to embark on a moral crusade against anything. It's not

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Tom Bethell is The American Spectator*'s Washington correspondent and a media fellow at the Hoover Institution.*

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clear, from Lemann's account, exactly what the economic problem was that needed correcting. Blacks in general were moving north for economic reasons—that is to say, they had higher paying jobs and better living conditions in Chicago than in Mississippi. Many of the blacks moving north were successfully moving into the middle class, as Lemann tells us.

But now he shifts scene and tells about Jack and Bobby and Sargent Shriver and Walter Heller, who had become convinced of the merits of decentralizing power, and the Office of Economic Opportunity. The idea was to have "maximum feasible participation" by the poor. There were lots of meetings and Daniel Patrick Moynihan threw them a few curve balls (he knew what was right but wanted to curry favor with the intellectuals). And so the Wrong Stuff emerged. The Woodlawn Organization in Chicago received $927,000, but they were associated with a gang, the Blackstone Rangers. This enraged Mayor Daley, so the program was bound to fail. And so on. (Earlier grants had gone to Daley-controlled organizations, however, but somehow they hadn't worked either.) Lemann construes this predictable failure oddly: "Because all the key participants in the meetings were white and from the North, they didn't have that ingrained awareness of the tragic potential of the national enterprise that virtually all African Americans, and many white southerners, possessed."

As anyone who has been near our inner cities knows, we really do have today a monumental problem of criminal gangs, drugs, lawlessness, aimless violence, out-of-wedlock births, ruined family life, and so on. And the whole horror-show is kept afloat on a sea of transfer payments from local, state, and federal taxpayers. The comparatively tiny Community Action program ($1.9 billion in its peak year), described by Lemann in such loving detail, is scarcely relevant to all this. Nor is it clear that there was by the early sixties any great urban problem that needed a Washington solution.

But the crusade was launched, welfare payments were increased, Aid to Families with Dependent Children made fathers independent of their children, food stamps were handed out, Medicaid was added, and so on. None of these programs was cut in the Reagan years, some were expanded (and some eligibility rules were tightened). And it was without doubt this massive and immoral flood of cash and in-kind payments that caused the moral collapse that we see in the ghettos today. Their unintentional effect has been to tell the recipients that they are no longer expected to be responsible for their own lives; that the white establishment was indeed guilty of sin in the past, is burdened with guilt today, and hereby makes amends with handouts. The result has been catastrophic (as it has also been, incidentally, in those Third World countries unfortunate enough to have become the recipients of American aid).

Lemann, of course, does not accept the welfare analysis—the "Charles Murray thesis," as he calls it. (Murray proposed it in *Losing Ground*, in 1984, and of course George Gilder said the same thing earlier: "The poor need the spur of their poverty.") Between 1965 and 1972, welfare benefits and welfare rolls increased together, Lemann points out, but after 1972, with the value of welfare not increasing, the problems associated with welfare did increase. Out-of-wedlock childbearing continued to rise after real welfare benefits declined, and so on. (Murray responds by saying that "more recent work shows that there is a relationship after all between welfare benefits and illegitimate births.")

The Murray thesis may find new support on the Indian reservations, where U.S. welfare programs are "enriched" by additional "native American" welfare. What are their indices of crime, poverty, and family breakup? Terry An-

Jacques Chirac, Steffi Graf, and Federico Fellini would like to have a word with you.

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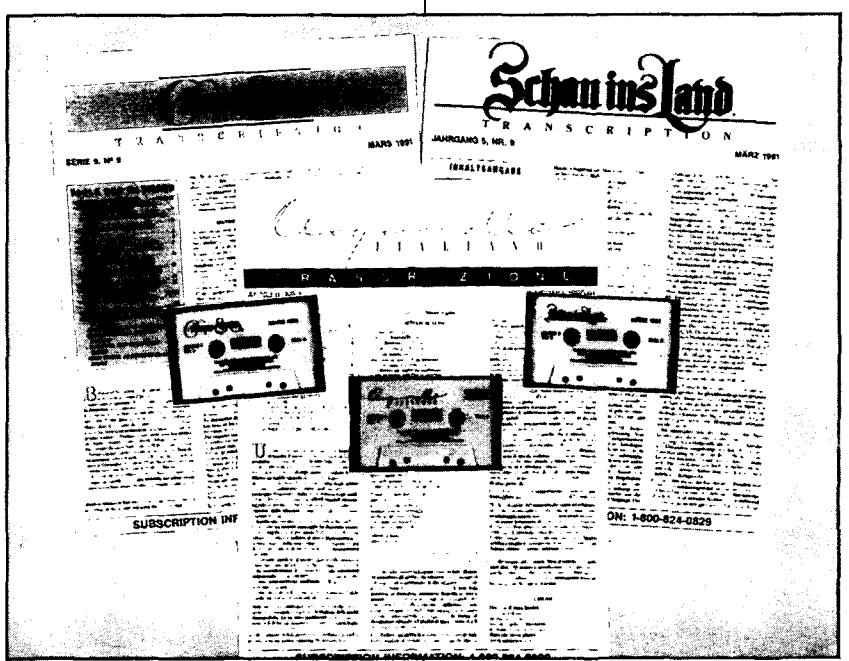

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derson's unfinished study may tell us. Another possibility is that the bad effects of welfare were delayed because it took several years to break down old habits and to convince recipients that there was no longer any accountability within the system.

"When people see the ghettos today they say, 'Wasn't that really caused by the failure of the war on poverty?' " Nick told me. " 'Aren't we looking at the wreckage of liberalism?' " His book addresses that perception. (Of course, such people mean by "war on poverty" transfer programs in general, not Sargent Shriver's program, so Lemann seems to be playing on a semantic confusion here.)

In any event, with liberal academics holding the line against Murray, and the large welfare programs thereby screened from conservative attack, Lemann may have felt that it remained only for him to delegitimize the (specific) War on Poverty as a case of botched politics in order to redeem the mission of liberalism in general. Large, morally ambitious domestic government programs might then seem feasible once again. And so, as I see it, his book is exculpatory at its core, and it has been so received by a grateful liberal audience.

In a final editorial, or Afterword, Lemann shows just how much he has moved to the left since I first knew him. He opposes the kind of privatization efforts that members of the Reagan and Bush Administrations have been talking about in desultory fashion for a decade, but have not yet implemented. (Tenant ownership of public housing, for example, still doesn't seem to be going anywhere.) "Ghetto development," Lemann confidently says, "is not going to work." We should be trying to bring the ghetto poor closer to the mainstream, he writes, "not encouraging them to develop a self-contained community apart from the mainstream" (for self-contained, read self-reliant).

He comes close to suggesting that black ghettos just can't make it without the federal government and shouldn't be allowed to try: "To assume that a federal government retreat and a renaissance in the ghettos will together prove to be the answer is to stand on its head the obvious moral of all our urban racial progress of the past generation, which is that educated people in the ghettos will seize upon government jobs as a way to exit."

Given the dispiritedness in the slums, he writes, it's not likely that residents will "mobilize around some new figure who preaches moderation and bourgeois values." (No, that's not right. It's the incentives that have to be changed, not the sermons.) Therefore, new undertakings in the ghettos "will have to be of enormous scope." He told the *Times* reporter that this entails new money on "education, crime prevention, social programs, prenatal care, and job training, among other things." Phew!

Conservatives who resist welfare are not hard-hearted. They merely expect people (blacks included) to behave rationally given their incentives (i.e., not to work if the same reward can be achieved by going to the Post Office at noon rather than the factory at 8:00 a.m.). Lemann thinks that conservatives have a "pessimistic" view of human nature. In fact, it's the liberals who persist in the delusion of an "unconstrained vision," to use Tom Sowell's phrase, and who seem to feel that good intentions are a sufficient basis for policy. The injustice historically done to blacks does not put them in a special category of victimhood. That is a dangerous line of thought, as we see now in Chicago, Clarksdale, and large sections of New Orleans. Nick Lemann believes that the U.S. has "unfinished business" in its struggle to overcome "its original sin of slavery." Countries don't suffer from original sin, however. People do. All of us, equally. In this debate, conservatives should pick up the idea of equality, now abandoned by liberals. □

Not the party line.

GRANT'S

INTEREST RATE OBSERVER

Vol. 9, No. 6 233 Broadway, New York, New York 10279 (212) 608-7994 MARCH 29, 1991

Desperate measures, bullish times

At the bottom of the Great Depression, the Federal Reserve became an original equity investor in the Federal Deposit Insurance Corp. Now, at what everybody's economics department agrees is the bottom of a petty, one-horse recession, the Fed is to become the agency's creditor.

The proposal that the Fed lend $25 billion to save the Bank Insurance Fund must have rung a bell with the elderly. It was in Franklin Roosevelt's time that the Fed contributed $139 million, representing what was then one-quarter of its systemwide surplus, to the FDIC's original capital (which came to $300 million). The law also stipulated that the Fed would have to produce another $139 million on 90 days' notice if the agency should ever need it. In 1947, the FDIC bought back its stock, and thereby released the Fed from its contingent capital call. A good thing, it now develops.

To judge by the thrust in junk bonds, common stocks, the dollar and Third World debt, at least one tentative investment conclusion can be drawn from the threat to the integrity of the Federal Reserve's balance sheet. We may infer (until further notice) that it doesn't matter.

In 1989, breaking a decades' long tradition of lending to solvent institutions, the Fed offered to lend to insolvent ones. "Under the arrangement announced today," *The New York Times* reported, "the Federal Reserve Banks agreed to join with the Home Loan Banks to provide cash in exchange for substandard collateral." The purpose was to forestall a run on broken thrifts.

And last month, in an exchange with Rep. Joseph Kennedy (D., Mass.) before the House Banking Committee, Alan Greenspan acknowledged that the Fed was thinking about buying commercial loans from banks to encourage new lending. A report in *The Wall Street Journal* briefly sent the pulses of gold buyers racing: "The Fed has been 'struggling' for the past 'couple of months,' Mr. Greenspan said, with the idea of whether there is any wisdom in 'the Fed taking on the role of a commercial lender.'"

But gold did not go up. On the contrary, it fell, and the dollar ran circles around the deutschemark. The identical reaction was produced a month later by the administration's idea that the central bank should lend billions to the FDIC. If anyone sold a bond in protest, the event went unreported. Is the market right in ignoring it, or are we wrong in worrying about it? If the Fed can lend to Lincoln Savings & Loan or Chrysler Corp. or the FDIC without raising objections, is there any reason to worry about anything?

We would like to get to the bottom of this. We've looked at the Fed's balance sheet, asked how the Fed came to let down its hair and confronted the exasperating question: In 1991, why do the things we like the best fall the most?...

For some time, we have believed that credit would come full circle, as all financial things eventually do. What made us so sure of ourselves was the knowledge (and we do know this) that the financial practices of the boom were unique. What we did not expect in 1991 is that junk bonds would outperform German government bonds. We did not anticipate that the greatest trade of the first quarter would be to sell gold (the ultimate low-yield investment) and buy Southland zeros or LTV common. When the deutschemark was recently exposed to the world as another paper currency, we prepared ourselves for a rally in gold. (*Grant's*, January 18.) We are still waiting for it.

After each crash and jolt of the past few years (1987, 1989 and 1990), we had expected the 1980s to give themselves up. When they did not surrender, we had at least expected them to be humble. We have repeatedly been disappointed. We are the ones who are humbled. So you may wonder: Why not sell gold and buy Macy? Because, never before in financial annals has a debt problem been deftly managed away. Debts have been liquidated or inflated away but never domesticated. What the bulls believe (whether they know it or not) is that the world's central banks can pull it off this time.

We do not believe that. We do not know Alan Greenspan personally, but we think we know the type. In consequence, we do not expect a frictionless resumption of economic growth as if Walter Wriston and Michael Milken had never worked in the financial services industry. We do not believe that the dollar is as good as gold, even if gold continues to trade like sand. We will hear from the 1990s yet, we believe.

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Michael Ledeen

OPERATION DESERT SHAME

As President Bush has learned to his chagrin, Realpolitik can justify short-term tactics, but not long-term strategy.

No one should have been surprised at our government's decision to stay out of the way when Saddam Hussein slaughtered his Kurds and Shi'ites. This is a respectable administration, and there are certain things that respectable administrations just don't do, like meddle in an Iraqi "civil war." Indeed, as the President has said so many times, he never promised to march on Baghdad, he only promised to liberate Kuwait, which he did. And yes, he feels bad about the poor Kurds (there has been no sympathy expressed for the Shi'ites in the south, even though they seem to make up 60 percent of the country), and he'll help the Kurdish refugees, but don't expect us to occupy Iraq, impose a government, and manage the place.

Up to a point, the President has been quite consistent about his Gulf policy. He took great pains to define his objectives and limit them, and there was nothing about removing Saddam in the various U.N. resolutions and congressional votes. Just liberating Kuwait. Of course, with very few exceptions, nobody believed him. Most everyone out there assumed that, while the publicly announced policy was Liberate Kuwait, the *real* policy was Smash Saddam.

This reminds me of an interesting episode in the history of Italian Communism. At the end of World War II, the Italian Communist leader, Palmiro Togliatti, announced that the Communist party had abandoned the insurrectionist strategy of the Leninists, and would only come to power through parliamentary means. He said this over and over again, but hardly anyone believed him—least of all, the Leninist members of his own party. Everyone thought these statements were a ruse to lull the bourgeoisie into a false sense of security, the better to slit their throats while they slept. Then, in 1948, someone shot and wounded Togliatti in Rome, and the insurrection broke out. When Togliatti was told of this, he was furious: "How could they? I told them, no insurrection."

The dirty secret was that the secret strategy was the public strategy, and the assumed strategy was not the real one.

So it is with Bush and the Gulf War. The secret was that the public strategy was the real strategy all along, to most of the world's astonishment. And Bush was surprised that everyone was surprised.

The world was surprised because most people refused to believe that the President had actually sent all those troops such a long way, just to drive the Iraqis out of Kuwait. It seemed inconceivable that so much power would be mobilized for such a limited objective. So it was assumed that there was a more serious, albeit unannounced objective all along, and what could it be but the destruction—that is, removal—of Saddam Hussein? After all, that would truly serve notice on future would-be aggressors that, in the New World Order, no leader would survive an act of gratuitous savagery on his or her neighbor.

And it was not just the logic of the situation that led most of the world to assume that Bush and Baker wanted the destruction of Saddam Hussein; it was also the President's words, urging the Iraqi people to rise against Saddam. The Shi'ites and Kurds assumed that this meant the United States would at least act to give them a fair shot at winning, but they forgot the lessons of Hungary in the fifties, and Poland and Nicaragua in the eighties.

There is no cause too worthy to be abandoned by the American government. And, between you and me, I don't think that this administration thinks of the Kurds and Shi'ites as particularly worthy. They certainly wouldn't qualify for membership in the sort of club that the Baker Boys like to frequent.

Strange to say, there is a status element in our current Middle East policy. We seem to love the upper class neighborhoods, like Saudi and Kuwaiti palaces. Kings are also okay, even when they call us names (this administration's love affair with the wretched little king of Jordan, who has elevated appeasement of Arab radicals to the basic principle of his foreign policy, is the most dramatic case in point). Ragtag people without much clout are not good dinner partners, so Kurds and Shi'ites just don't qualify. But ragtag people with high incomes are just fine, so the Palestinians—thanks to longstanding Saudi funding—sit at the big table. The Israelis are the unwanted guests, accepted because somehow they got an invitation, but snubbed because of their shabby dress and poor manners.

Status must be a large part of the explanation, because there isn't very much logic in the distinctions currently being made in the White House and Foggy Bottom. If the partitioning of Iraq is so bad, then why is the partitioning of Israel so desirable? If the Palestinians are entitled to an entity, why not the Kurds and Shi'ites? The answer must be that the Saudis don't want to see any other *Arab* country partitioned, because they think that somebody might get the idea of partitioning *them*. And since Bush and the Baker Boys really like the Saudis, they wouldn't do anything that makes the royal family nervous.

This is foolish, because it puts us at loggerheads with our own principles, and with the great democratic tidal wave that is sweeping the world at this moment. I believe that our objective, in the Middle East as elsewhere, must be to support the democrats. That means Yeltsin, that means the Africans struggling for some sort of multiparty system in country after country, that means the Kuwaiti reformers as against the Emir, the Chinese students (and the Dalai Lama) against the gerontocracy, and the anti-Castro forces in Cuba. It most assuredly does not mean the Saudi royal family, which, I believe, will have to reform and share power if it is going to survive this period. There are too many Western-educated Saudis now, who share our notions of fairness and accountability, for the Kingdom to go back to business as usual. King Fahd is going to have to share power with these people, or share the fate of the Shah of Iran (in Iran, a Westernized middle class joined with an alienated radical Islamic movement to remove what was at the time the most civilized regime in the Muslim Middle East). Unfortunately, it does not appear as if King Fahd is going to do this, or take the great opportunity given him by the war, and make a deal with Israel. If he were truly smart, Fahd could offer a

Michael Ledeen is resident scholar at the American Enterprise Institute.

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partnership between Saudi money and Israeli entrepreneurship that could transform the region and really make the desert flower (think of all those Russian Jewish scientists and engineers!). If he offered that, he could undoubtedly get some kind of timesharing arrangement for parts of Jerusalem—after all, the Temple Mount, which is what matters most to him, is currently under Arab rule (one of the least-known facts about the Middle East) and Israeli security. He has only to substitute himself for Little King Hussein as protector of the Mount. But we don't seem to be encouraging him, either to share power or to join in a partnership with Israel. More's the pity.

The United States has never been very good at this sort of diplomacy, because it means that you have to bring bad news to people. At the moment, given the constraints of the kind of respectable society in which this administration likes to travel, it is hard to imagine the Secretary of State explaining to his buddy King Fahd that it is better to democratize now than to face insurrection later on. We should have said that to Gorbachev some years ago, as to the inscrutable masters of Peking, but we opted for good manners and polite chitchat. Gorbachev in the Soviet Union, Fahd in the Middle East; same lyrics, slightly different tune, but the message is the same in each case. We're not playing our music, but theirs.

By betraying our own principles, we paradoxically hasten the doom of our high-society friends in the region, for American politics do not permit stable, long-term relations with dictators. After a while, we begin to ask why we are being so nice to people who are opposed to our values. In America, Realpolitik can justify short-term tactics, never long-term strategy. That is why, in the end, we will have to abandon the Saudi royal family, just as we abandoned the Shah, and Ferdinand Marcos, and the others. It is as inevitable as it is proper, for we are the world's one truly revolutionary society, and when we abandon our own principles, those principles reassert themselves, sometimes to our embarrassment. That is why no long-term relationship with the Saudi royal family can work without the liberalization of their regime. It is also why our embarrassing nuzzling of Hafez al-Assad, one of the world's outstanding mass murderers, won't work either.

The current administration doesn't see it that way, for, in good conservative fashion, the President and his men seek to defend traditional boundaries as, in like manner, they enjoy the company of traditional leaders (or their concept of traditional leaders; the Saudis are Abu-come-latelies, after all). With such a world view, one invariably adopts a traditional, balance-of-power foreign policy, just as Bush and the Baker Boys did with regard to the Kurds and Shi'ites. But we are a revolutionary nation, and our objective must be to advance our revolutionary values in the world. Those hostile to our values are automatically hostile to *us*, and they will attack us, regardless of our policies toward them. The world's dictators hate the United States because of what we are, not because of what we do.

That is why we are obliged to support the Kurds and the Shi'ites in their just struggle against the tyranny of Saddam Hussein. Those in the White House and the State Department who say they do not wish to get involved in the Iraqi Civil War ignore the fact that we unleashed the anti-Saddam forces in the first place, in the name of the just struggle against a tyrant who threatened to become the paramount force in a strategically sensitive area of the world. The peoples of the region see the defeat of the Kurds and Shi'ites as our defeat, and we should see it that way, too.

Desert Storm was a victory for American power and American values; its aftermath—let's call it Desert Shame—has left us and our principles bloodied and battered. □

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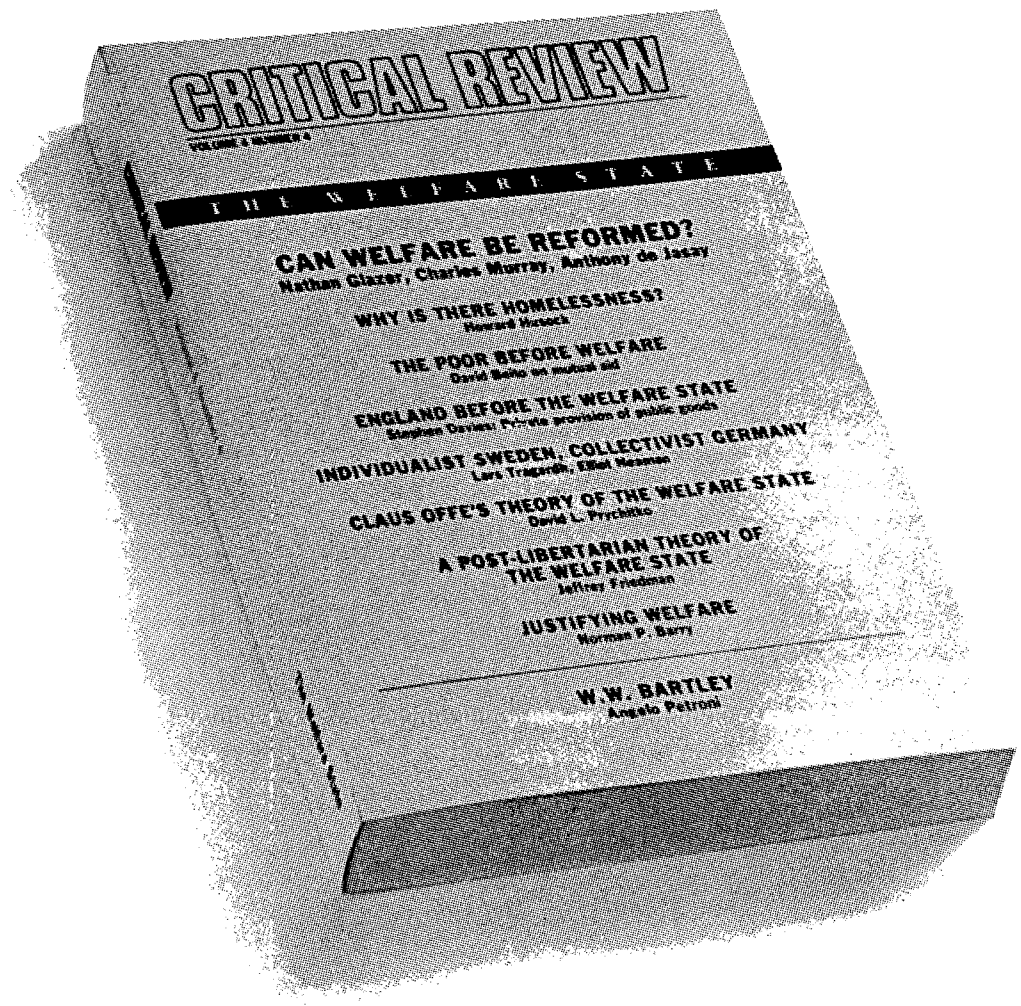

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William Tucker

CHRONICLER WITHOUT A CLUE

Nicholas Lemann reports brilliantly on the great black migration from South to North in this century, only to stumble when trying to account for the disintegration of the black family that followed in its wake.

Nicholas Lemann's *The Promised Land: The Great Black Migration and How It Changed America*[1] is already being hailed as a seminal work. Hodding Carter III, himself an old Southern progressive, calls it a "heartfelt and brilliant achievement, which, if we are lucky, will force the complex questions of race and class back to the top of the national agenda." George Will praises it as "the definitive account of how the nation arrived at its current dangerous condition." Lemann has been feted by the Manhattan Institute and seems to be winning support among conservatives on the principle that any liberal willing to admit that not every black teenager is a budding rocket scientist held back by racial prejudice must have achieved enlightenment.

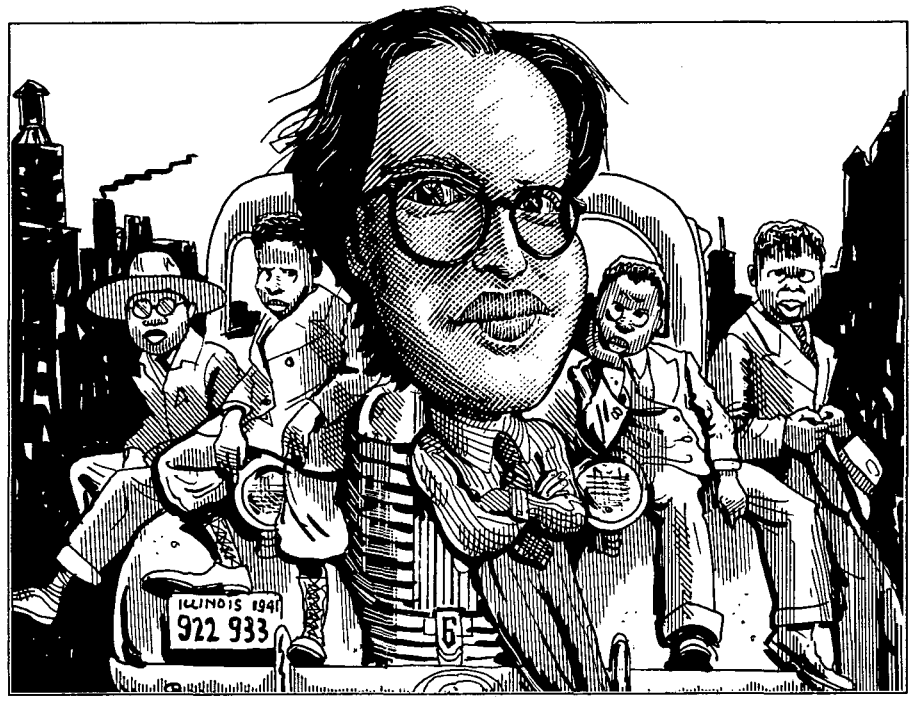
Indeed, the book is well reported, carefully detailed, and exquisite in its efforts to capture the heroic struggles of black people this century. But frankly, I can't see that it will change much. Lemann may be one of the first liberals to describe lower-class black life as it is: the tawdriness, the casual subjection to drugs, the easy illegitimacies, the almost complete inability to plan or sustain any effort toward future goals. But what took so long? The disintegration has been going on for twenty-five years. Honest journalists and scholars have described it hundreds of times, and millions of people have acknowledged it by moving as far away from black neighborhoods as possible.

Only liberals have stubbornly insisted on seeing things through the prism of their own misconceptions (while maintaining their own comfortable distance as well). Now that one writer is willing to admit the truth, is that such a cause for celebration? Much as Lemann is willing to look at black life as it is, he is not much willing to give up his own preconceptions. The book's very structure suggests the liberals' first principle: that what happens in Washington is central to every social issue, that everyone's fate lies with the federal government.

The Promised Land is divided into five lengthy chapters, beginning with a portrayal of life in rural Mississippi in the 1930s and '40s. Lemann follows Ruby Daniels, Uless Carter, and several of their friends and offspring as they migrate north in the 1940s and '50s and witness (in some instances embody) the disintegration of the Chicago black community in the 1960s and '70s. The narrative eventually returns to Mississippi, where a few of his subjects find solace.

The opening chapter is the most beautifully realized in the book. The story begins in Clarksdale, Mississippi, a sultry Delta town where blacks make up more than half the population and where the civil rights movement eventually took root. Lemann uses as a central metaphor the mechanized cotton picker, a primitive bit of machinery introduced in the 1940s that doomed the tenant farm. Under tenant farming—the system that replaced, and in many ways perpetuated, nineteenth-century slavery—black families living in isolated wooden shacks would contract with white farmers to raise a crop, then "settle" at the end of the fall harvest. Often as not, the black farmers were informed at the "settle" that they had accumulated unspecified debts and owed the owner money. (White sharecroppers did only marginally better.) Mostly illiterate and perpetually shackled by a strict and brutal system of racial segregation, the tenant farmers remained virtual prisoners to a system that offered them little more than a place to live and a portion of the crop. When Martin Luther King first visited Mississippi in the 1960s, he encountered tenant farmers who had never seen U.S. currency.

As a civil rights worker in Mississippi in 1964, I met a woman who, after telling me her family's story through several generations, concluded: "What I've never been able to understand is this: How come the colored people been working so hard all these years and still got nothing to show for it?" I don't think I ever completely understood the answer to her question until reading this first chapter of Lemann's book.



In his second chapter, "Chicago," Lemann describes the odyssey of Southern blacks as they migrated to the northern cities—"the promised land." The road was well traveled. At one point in the 1950s, 2,200 Southern blacks would arrive at Chicago's Illinois Central station every week.

The world the former sharecroppers found, although equally segregated, was not chaotic. Several of Lemann's raconteurs report the pride and excitement they felt in discovering thriving black neighborhoods filled with bustling stores and plentiful job opportunities. Men and women who had worked for a dollar a day picking cotton were soon making more than a dollar an hour cleaning offices and working in factories. Certainly there was economic hardship and white prejudice, but there was a camaraderie among blacks that compensated in many ways. Prominent entertainers and legendary sports heroes like Joe Louis lived in the neighborhood and often walked the streets escorted by excited children. (Not for nothing do blacks refer to each other as "brothers" and "sisters.")

The Chicago political machine took this influx in stride. Mayor Richard Daley, although eventually branded a racist, was willing to incorporate blacks into the system. Like all machine politicians, he offered a simple exchange: patronage for votes. Black preachers were put on the payroll for the promise of delivering their congregations for the machine. Daley constructed a vast network of public housing that both kept blacks in their own neighborhoods and concentrated votes, so that the projects often delivered nearly unanimous majorities for the machine candidates.

Daley, who could do nothing if not count heads, saw that the burgeoning black population would have to be brought into the system in the traditional way. When Jesse Jackson first ap-

[1]Alfred A. Knopf, $24.95.

William Tucker, our New York correspondent, is a writer for Forbes.

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peared before Daley in the 1960s, reports Lemann, the Mayor offered him a job as a toll-taker on the Illinois Tollway. Until the riots of the mid-sixties, Mayor Daley was actually losing favor with his white constituents, who perceived him as pro-black.

Although Lemann does not acknowledge it, what he is describing in this chapter is the urban transformation every ethnic group has experienced. As Sam Bass Warner described it in *Streetcar Suburbs*, ethnic groups in Boston first formed tightly knit urban enclaves, then split apart as they moved to the suburbs, where ethnic identity blurred and self-separation took place by class. If the black experience was different, it was only because middle-class blacks, penned in by housing discrimination in the suburbs, were forced to remain in their ethnic enclaves long after they had become middle-class. (The frustrations of one black family trying to leave the ghetto was the subject of Lorraine Hansberry's famous play, *Raisin in the Sun*.)

Lemann interrupts the personal narratives of Daniels and Carter in 1964, in favor of a ponderous third chapter (almost one-third of the book) entitled "Washington." Instead of following the heroic progress of Southern migrants, we are suddenly set amidst decades-old gossip about Sargent Shriver and Hubert Humphrey. We discover, for example, that Shriver wasn't a "real Kennedy," but was a little more Catholic and a lot more concerned about the poor, which is why he was the only family member able to bridge the gap between the Kennedy and Johnson administrations.

And what a gap it was. For Lemann, as for all liberals, the great tragedy of the era—and the reason the War on Poverty didn't work—was the antagonism between Lyndon Johnson and Bobby Kennedy. Who was right? LBJ, with his gargantuan appetite for admiration (and devious nature), who nevertheless could get things done? Or Bobby, with his Irish charm (and devious nature), who almost brought us all together for one vast national orgy of common purpose? Like all good liberals, Lemann can't quite make up his mind (although he does have his *bête noire*, the sinister Daniel Patrick Moynihan, who is always undermining one program or other in pursuit of some personal agenda). To my mind, it is all irrelevant. The presumption of both LBJ and Robert Kennedy was the same: Government is the source of all beneficence and social progress for blacks. As with Mayor Daley, there was a price to be paid.

The only way to understand the War on Poverty is from the bureaucrats' point of view. I don't think I ever grasped the nature of that effort until I read an anecdote in Ken Auletta's *The Underclass*. Auletta describes a troop of federal bureaucrats arriving in a small Mississippi town to set up a poverty program. They quickly noted that teenage girls who became pregnant were being ostracized by the community. "Aha!" they said. "Here's our constituency." They set up a program to aid teenage mothers and, not incidentally, to reform the community's intolerance of teenage pregnancy.

The whole idea of the War on Poverty, from beginning to end, was to turn up "new leadership" in black communities. The problem was that the natural leaders—the preachers, schoolteachers, politicians—had already been co-opted by the system. As a result, Shriver and his minions bypassed Daley's Chicago machine and handed over the keys of federal patronage to the Blackstone Rangers, Chicago's most notorious street gang. The Rangers were given a $927,000 federal grant by the Office of Economic Opportunity (OEO). They even attended President Richard Nixon's 1969 Inaugural Ball as guests of Sen. Charles Percy. After stealing a good bit of the money and committing various rapes and murders, most members ended up in Illinois prisons, where they ran massive drug operations.

Well, so what? Giving money to street gangs was probably worth trying once. After all, it was 1968 and there were a lot of loopy ideas in the air. Lemann brushes it off by concluding: "In the history of OEO, there was no grant that was as complete a failure." But how atypical was it? The story of liberal intervention in the affairs of blacks is one long history of miscalculation. There is Senator Edward Brooke's 1969 bill that set public housing rents at no more than one-quarter the tenants' income, thus ruining the finances of the public housing authorities. There is the ACLU's diligent undermining of tenant-selection in public housing, which turned the projects over to the most destructive, crime-oriented residents. And there are the poverty programs themselves, which Lemann admits never did much for the poor, but provided upward mobility for educated blacks. (He does not mention the white bureaucrats who thrived on the War on Poverty as well.)

Conversely, Lemann discovers that it is the despised traditional institutions—the church and the military—that are now offering blacks the only real opportunity. "In both cases, the common thread is a strict system of rules, requirements, and high expectations of a kind that the projects, the public schools, and the social agencies have long since abandoned." Lemann quotes the black priest/principal of a successful Catholic elementary school:

> We bear down hard on basics. Hard work, sacrifice, dedication. A twelve-month school year. An eight-hour day. You can't leave the campus. Total silence in the lunchroom and throughout the building. Expulsion for graffiti. Very heavy emphasis on moral pride. The parents must come in every month and pick up the report card. . . . We have a waiting list of over a thousand, and the more we bear down, the longer the list gets.

Does that make Lemann a conservative? Not on your life. Rather than pursue the implications of his own text, he wants another War on Poverty—only this time without the Lyndon/Bobby melodrama messing the whole thing up:

> Given the poverty and dispiritedness in the slums, it is unlikely that their residents will suddenly mobilize around some new figure who preaches moderation and bourgeois values. Any planned undertaking that would have a chance of affecting the ghettos substantially would have to be of enormous scope. For both practical and moral reasons, the institution by far best suited to the task is the federal government.

And you thought I was kidding.

But the biggest flaw of *The Promised Land* is its unconvincing explanation of the breakdown of the black family. Rural people have been migrating to cities in large numbers since at least the seventeenth century, yet none have ever experienced anything comparable. What made the experience of American blacks different?

Here's the way Lemann explains the situation: Blacks living on tenant farms in the rural South *already* lived lives of family disorganization that were similar if not identical to lower-class black lives today. Single-motherhood was widespread in the South before the great migration. When rural blacks moved north, this disarray came with them. For a while it was kept under control by middle-class blacks. But when these stable families finally cracked the suburbs in the 1960s, the remaining poor were left with no role models. In an ironic twist (which Lemann does not particularly emphasize), it was the breakdown of suburban housing barriers that ultimately led to the disintegration of family life in urban neighborhoods. According to Lemann, the emergence of hyperviolent underclass life in the cities was a natural outgrowth of the Southern experience. There is only one problem with this explanation: it can't be supported. In fact, most of the evidence points in the opposite direction.

Lemann's theory rests primarily on Charles S. Johnson's study *Shadow of the Plantation* (1934), which found 152 of 612 rural black families (25 percent) to be headed by single women. Other observers also noted what were considered high rates of illegitimacy. In the 1930s, Gunnar Myrdal discovered 16 percent of Southern black children to have been born out of wedlock—eight times the white rate. In the 1920s, E. Franklin Frazier found that 15 percent of black births in Cook County Hospital were illegitimate. Yet, however much these numbers departed from traditional standards, they were light-years away from today's rates of 50 percent female-headed households and 60-80 percent illegitimacy.

Particularly nettlesome for Lemann is Herbert Gutman's monumental *The Black Family Under Slavery and Freedom*, which found that, even during slavery, most black women ended up in long-term marital relationships. Noting this stability under the more oppressive conditions of slavery, Lemann is forced to admit, "It is somewhat mysterious where the structure of the sharecropper family came from." Nevertheless, he concludes, "It is clear that whatever the cause of its differences, black sharecropper society on the eve of the introduction of the mechanical cotton picker was the equivalent of big-city ghetto society today in many ways."

Lemann is wrong on several counts. In the first place, he exaggerates the difference between slave and sharecropper families. Gutman's records show that young black women tended to have one or two pre-marital children and then settle down into long-term monogamous relationships. This pattern has clear antecedents in West Africa, where marriage is a very different institution and where men have far weaker paternal

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The pattern of early illegitimacies followed by a marital commitment makes some economic sense. Unmarried girls with children almost always remained with their natal families, which were able to support them (the children often being the same age as younger brothers and sisters). Only when the daughter had her second or third child did she become a burden. Then it was time for her to start supporting herself—which meant getting married.

The pattern was still clearly observable when I was in the South in the 1960s. In all my time there, I never saw a tenant farm run by a single woman. Such an arrangement would have been virtually impossible, since farming was backbreaking work undertaken only by men. But it was a rare family that didn't have a teenage daughter or two who had their own children. In fact, it was hard to find a young woman over age 20 who didn't already have one illegitimate child.

This is the point that liberals invariably miss in their never-ending quest to prove that Aid to Families with Dependent Children (AFDC) has not caused the demise of the black family. They will show that illegitimacy rates have always been high among blacks. They will demonstrate that the number of children on welfare actually fell during the 1970s while illegitimacy rates increased. They will argue that there is no correlation between the birth rate among black teenagers and the rise and fall of welfare grants.

But that is not the point. It is not that the welfare grant encourages black women to have babies. It is that welfare encourages women *not to get married*. Welfare has served as an economic alternative to marriage, intervening in a young black woman's life at precisely the moment when she would ordinarily marry—after she has had her second or third illegitimate child.

What happened when the black family moved north had nothing to do with whether blacks got government jobs or who moved to the suburbs. Rather, a system of family formation with its own internal instabilities collided head-on with a welfare system that encouraged women not to marry. Welfare does not "break up" black families. *It keeps them from forming*. The typical welfare mother is not a matriarch with seven children by five different men; she is a woman who has one or two children in her early years and then settles down to a life of relative stability with her welfare check.

The worst consequence, of course, is that poor black men have become irrelevant to the family. Always tenuously bound to the family due to the tradition of economic independence among black women (again traceable to West Africa), the lower-class black man has now become a completely useless appendage. He can catch on with an independent welfare mother and prove his importance through infidelities and sexual exploits (I hear about them all the time on the subway). But in their hearts, black men know that, in the end, their women can get along very well without them. As one black man in Newark told Bill Moyers on his TV special, "Those women are more married to the welfare than they are to the guy who's sleeping in bed with them at night."

All this produces a life of constant humiliation—a fear of being dominated by women, a need to prove manhood by spectacular feats of crime and abandon, an intense intermale rivalry, a lack of concern about the future, and, as a result, a life expectancy lower than that of men in Bangladesh.

What is lost is the role men play in socializing young boys and girls—in creating a civilization. The stupefying levels of violence and purely biological behavior that have become the norm among today's black underclass are the result. None of this is confronted in Lemann's book.

So how can the situation ever improve? Lemann's call for one more round at the War-on-Poverty Bar and Grill is almost irrelevant. Jack Kemp's talk of "empowerment" and encouraging independence among the underclass, however good-hearted, doesn't approach the root of the problem, either. Black America will probably not begin pulling itself back together until the day when black men start burning down welfare offices and reclaiming their women from the bureaucracy.

Does this sound far-fetched? In April, Wayne Bryant, the Democratic majority leader of the New Jersey State Assembly, introduced legislation that would overhaul the welfare system by encouraging women to marry and denying them increased benefits after their first two children. Bryant, who is black and represents Camden, one of the nation's most godforsaken ghettos, commented: "I've been thinking about the welfare system for ten years. It is the only institution we know that is designed to destroy the family."

The proposal received guarded support from both Democrats and Republicans, but was immediately opposed by the ACLU, several Legal Aid organizations, and other leftover sixties trash. Yet there is no doubt that, using their usual access to the judiciary, these modern scalawags could easily frustrate any legislative effort at reform.

But at least the lines are drawn. Let the struggle begin. □

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Joe Loughran

FREDDY ST GERMAIN'S LONG RIDE

Congress and the S&L scandals have a long history, going back at least to the reign of former Democratic Rep. Fernand St Germain, who, while overseeing the deregulation of the nation's S&Ls, became a multimillionaire—and a House ethics committee inquiry liked what it saw.

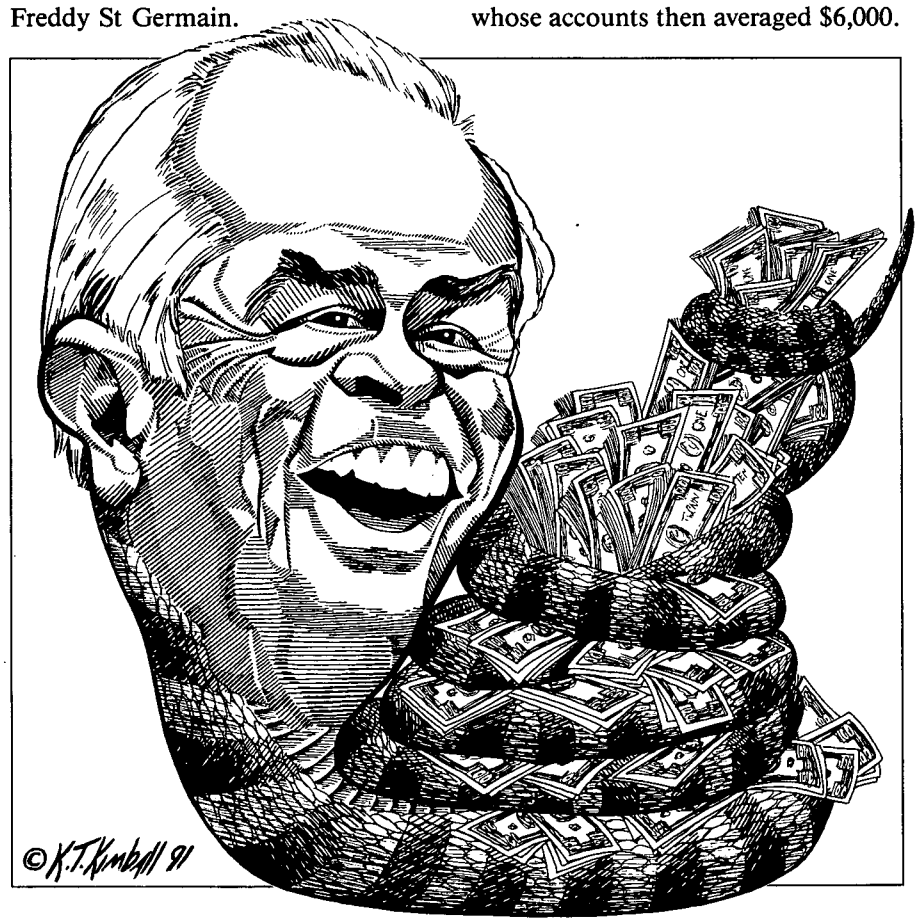
Pick a number, any number, but make it big—between a hopelessly optimistic $200 billion and a horrific $1.4 trillion. The S&L crisis—which Martin Mayer called "the worst public scandal in American history"[1]—affords sufficient blame for all: the Reagan and Bush administrations, Congress, industry executives and developers, investment banks, law and accounting firms, PACs, regulators. But with everyone's prints on the body in the most expensive whodunit in history, accountability will prove problematic.

Among "the usual suspects," however, only Congress enjoys oversight immunity. Free of the independent prosecutors it routinely seeks for real and imagined executive-branch abuses, Congress insists that its ethics committees suffice when allegations of misconduct arise. The Senate Ethics Committee's Keating Five candy court did little to assuage the public with its expedient sacrifice of lame (read: sitting) duck Alan Cranston or by toothless findings of four senators' "poor judgement and insensitivity," given special counsel Robert Bennett's extraordinarily detailed presentation of the evidence.

That it sought to whitewash Senate complicity in the Lincoln Savings and Loan's $2-billion failure was quite unremarkable. Congress has focused on political containment of the looming S&L disaster for half a decade. Fiscal containment, on the other hand, has never concerned it: taxpayers will receive, and future generations pay, the bill. But the Keating Five case was neither the first nor the worst coverup of congressional involvement in the crisis. That honor arguably belongs to a 1987 House inquiry into the conduct of former Democratic Rep. Fernand J. St Germain, a principal architect of S&L deregulation, who became a multimillionaire by investing with "long-standing friends" whose activities he regulated.

Freddy St Germain

Fernand Joseph St Germain (no period after the *t*) was elected to Congress from Rhode Island's 1st District in 1960. A freshman assignment to the Banking and Currency Committee would see him through his career. In 1971, he began an 18-year chairmanship of its Bank Supervision and Insurance subcommittee. In 1981 he became chairman of the whole committee, now called Banking, Finance and Urban Affairs. To suggest the 1970s and 1980s were a period of transition in the financial industry would be rather like contending that today's S&Ls are suffering from liquidity problems. And few congressmen wielded more power over the industry than Freddy St Germain.



In legislative and investment matters, St Germain worked fast, late, and often under cover of darkness. Of his 1980 Depository Institutions Deregulation and Monetary Control Act (DIDMCA), *Politics in America: The 100th Congress* (1987) stated:

> After working on the measure for more than a year, St Germain tacked most of his 260-page bill onto a minor piece of Senate-passed legislation and got it through the House at 2:30 a.m. on the last night of the session. After that, he raced across the Capitol to the Senate . . . [which] passed the bank legislation shortly before sunrise, and Congress went home.

A key DIDMCA provision raised deposit insurance from $40,000 to $100,000 per account, setting the stage for disaster literally overnight. A curious "compromise" (a proposed increase to *$50,000* had met stiff opposition), it was never intended to protect individual savers, whose accounts then averaged $6,000. The change increased taxpayer liability exponentially, as deposits flooded back to S&Ls from monstrously successful (but uninsured) money market funds (MMFs). Regulations that limited brokered deposits—which electronically chase the highest interest rates around the country—to 5 percent of total were dropped. A 2-percent commission (much more in the case of sick S&Ls) bought S&Ls the chance to grow beyond their means and management, while generating hundreds of millions of dollars for Wall Street firms, financial intermediaries, and boiler rooms.

There was a catch. In a 1990 *Harper's* article, L. J. Davis wrote that in the two years following DIDMCA's enactment, the thrift industry's net worth plunged from $32.2 billion to $3.7 billion. As Davis explained, "Paying 12 and 13 percent for their deposits while receiving a pittance in income from their mortgage portfolios, the thrifts had managed to virtually wipe themselves out."

A return to Congress for further relief yielded the Garn-St Germain Depository Institutions Act of 1982. Garn-St Germain allowed S&Ls to invest 40 percent of assets in non-residential real estate and 30 percent in consumer loans. More liberal than historically lax state charters, it undercut what Davis said was the state charters' *raison d'être*: "In return for the more liberal provisions of state law, the state-chartered banks and thrifts were expected to make handsome campaign contributions to the men and women who have made liberal provisions possible."

The states' response, according to Davis, was instantaneous:

> On the last night of California's 1982 legislative session, [the Nolan Bill] passed in 20 seconds with not a hint of debate. Under the Nolan Bill, a California-chartered thrift could invest 100 percent of its deposits in any venture it chose. . . . The Nolan Bill was quickly copied in Texas and Florida state charters.

Garn-St Germain all but freed S&Ls

[1]See Martin Mayer, *The Greatest-Ever Bank Robbery.* Scribner's, $24.95.

Joe Loughran is a writer living in New Hampshire. This is another in a series of TAS *articles on the Great American Congress in Crisis.*

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to lend money to or "invest" in any venture with a taxpayer-backed guarantee.

A September 11, 1985, article by Brooks Jackson of the *Wall Street Journal* paraphrased a St Germain remark that "you never get rich in office" before chronicling several investments by which he had done just that. As the story broke, St Germain was blocking an $8.5 billion Federal Savings and Loan Insurance Corporation cash infusion with which Federal Home Loan Bank Board chairman Edwin Gray proposed to expedite an S&L cleanup expected to cost a "mere" $50 billion.

Common Cause immediately called for an investigation. The ethics committee did not stir. In November, St Germain admitted failing to disclose seven flights on an S&L corporate jet that violated congressional gift rules, and possibly federal law. The committee was unmoved. Common Cause renewed its call for an investigation in mid-December. On February 5, 1986, the House ethics committee voted to investigate. It issued the required subpoenas on August 28, a year after allegations surfaced. Its final report noted without irony that the delay provided "insufficient time . . . to receive and analyze the subpoenaed materials."[2] The delay guaranteed St Germain's re-election and his chairmanships. The report asserted a commitment to make the case "a matter of utmost priority" in the 100th Congress.

The report is an unquestioning account of a lucrative web of "long-standing friendships" spun by St Germain among S&L executives, developers, and others. Chairman Julian C. Dixon (D-Cal.) submitted the report to then-Speaker Jim Wright (a future *soi-disant* "victim of ethics cannibals") on April 9, 1987, while five senators were meeting elsewhere on Capitol Hill on behalf of Charles H. Keating, Jr.

The committee's outside counsel, the law firm of Johnnie L. Cochran, Jr., provided another twist. A June 1989 *Wall Street Journal* article described Cochran as "a long-time friend of Rep. Dixon [who] at the time headed the [Los Angeles International] Airport commission," which gave the concession for twenty-one duty-free, news, and gift shops in April 1986. Dixon's wife Betty bought 3 percent of the concession (annual sales $120 million) for less than $15,000 in July 1986, and received more than $150,000 in dividends, plus unspecified director's fees, in less than three years. Curiously, the ethics committee chairman failed to disclose the investment before the story broke.

The committee reviewed St Germain's gift flights, his relationship with Florida Federal Savings and Loan, his real estate investments in Florida and Rhode Island, and his purchase of five International House of Pancakes restaurants. Here is what it found:

Free Flights

House rules bar acceptance of gifts worth $100 or more from anyone with an interest in legislation. Federal law requires disclosure of gifts totalling $250 or more. The committee listed seven gift flights received from Florida Federal Savings and Loan between March 1979 and February 1985. Each cost $99 or less, but St Germain violated House rules in 1980 by accepting two flights worth $198. The committee wrote, "This violation was *de minimis* in amount and a singular occurrence not part of an overall pattern of improper acceptance."

. It seemed unlikely that three late-winter flights between Washington, D.C., and Florida would cost only $99. A call to the *Official Airline Guide* contradicted the committee's summary. While its archives reflected date-of-flight purchases for the month in question, advance purchase discounts would defeat the implication that the flights arose spontaneously. *OAG* archives indicated at least three violations at coach rates, no substitute for a "Hawker Siddeley twin-engine jet . . . [with] luxury seating for seven." Non-disclosure of the 1980 flights, at $265 each, violated federal law.

Florida Federal Savings and Loan

As Florida Federal successfully sought to convert to a stock company, St Germain aide Paul Nelson called the Federal Home Loan Bank Board (FHLBB) several times to "inquire into the status. . . . [Nelson] did not specifically recall whether he made these calls at the behest of Rep. St Germain." If unprompted, his solicitude toward St Germain's "good friend," founder and president Raleigh W. Greene, Jr., was an unprecedented turn for a non-constituent.

The committee found St Germain's failure to "specifically report" his May 1983 purchase of $30,000 in Florida Federal stock a "deficiency." A September 1984 amendment to his disclosure documents clarified the stockholding but again failed to report the transaction date. The committee acknowledged, "St Germain has never disclosed the purchase transaction by stating the date or category of value. Counsel for the congressman did not offer any plausible explanation for the non-reporting." The committee nevertheless concluded they were "not the product of [his] desire to avoid public awareness of his stock ownership," even as its Florida Federal narrative raised serious doubts.

In September 1983, four months after St Germain's stock purchase, Florida Federal announced a merger with First Mutual Savings of Pensacola, which the FHLBB halted. In April 1984, it announced a second agreement. Concerned that Florida Federal would force First Mutual to pay "unreasonable" post-merger dividends, the Bank Board's conditional approval precluded the eventuality. Florida Federal withdrew once more. The committee stated: "The condition that Florida Federal found most undesirable was that imposing limitations on the payment of dividends."

The Keating Five case was neither the first nor the worst coverup of congressional involvement in the S&L crisis.

In this light, St Germain's misleading disclosures hardly appear inadvertent. The stockholding surfaced a year after the first merger attempt and five months after the second. His explanation that the investment was "intended to be temporary" would support a contention that he originally sought short-term gains which might have accrued had the merger proceeded unconditionally. Could conversations with such Florida Federal officers as founder Greene on five pre-conversion, pre-merger gift flights have included the S&L's future prospects?

Only fifteen months elapsed from staff intervention with the FHLBB to conversion to St Germain's investment to Florida Federal's second failed merger attempt. The committee found nothing irregular in a clearly dubious progression involving "long-standing friendships" between the chairman of the Financial Institutions Supervision, Regulation, and Insurance subcommittee and the S&L executives. Yet the committee twice "admonish[ed] all members to avoid . . . even an inference . . . suggesting improper action."

Florida Real Estate

The committee next reviewed St Germain's Florida real estate investments, including:

•*Bayfront Tower Condominium.* In March 1979, Joseph T. Lettelleir, president of Florida First Service Corporation, a wholly owned Florida Federal subsidiary, suggested St Germain purchase a unit in St. Petersburg's Bayfront Tower in a "distress sale." A friend since 1972, the year after St Germain became a banking subcommittee chairman, Lettelleir "knew of the congressman's interest in purchasing Florida property." The sales agreement, "subject solely to Mr. Lettelleir's approval and control," included a price of $106,000, a $10,600 deposit, and an $84,800, 29-year Florida Federal mortgage at 9.25 percent. The committee found no market "variance" and concluded, "no further action is warranted." It did not account for a missing $10,600, 10 percent of the purchase price.

•*Tampa Legal Properties.* In February 1982, Greene "assigned 20 percent of his interest in the Tampa Legal Properties partnership" to St Germain because "his friend was interested in Florida investments." The original partnership had seventeen investors; one owned 50 percent. The committee found no irregularities, even though the money invested by and shares of the sixteen investors listed in its report did not add up to the stated 50 percent, or $335,000.

•*Village Square of Titusville.* Ethics math again came a cropper with an October 1983 agreement to purchase a $47,500 condominium with a $1,000 deposit. Rhode Island Federal S&L originated a $43,110 mortgage, leaving an unaccounted-for gap of $3,390. The $4,810.55 paid into escrow covered the deposit and closing costs. Were the $3,390 included (and there was no such indication), closing costs could not have exceeded an unlikely $421.

St Germain leased the condo to First Service Properties for $46 more than his monthly payments. The committee stated, "Florida Federal was not connected with this property *acquisition*" [emphasis added], but did not comment on the odd similarity between lessee First Service Properties and Lettelleir's Florida First Service Corporation. St Germain incorrectly listed the purchase price as $17,900 in documents signed and dated May 15, 1986.

Minor quibble and major point: Given a chronic failure to catch mathematical or clerical errors, can committee judgments on broader issues be held any less suspect?

•*E. B. Porter Trust.* The trust included five properties and five original partners. Three, including Greene, sold St Germain a combined 5 percent share in June 1982 for $39,000, suggesting a total valuation of some $780,000. Eleven months later, "certain properties" were sold for $1.3 million. The trust still owned five parcels in 1985. The committee concluded St Germain's contribution "reflect[ed] his share in the holdings," although no summary of purchases, sales, and residual valuations was provided. The $46,399 purchase price listed in disclosure documents indicated additional investments (or further errors).

[2]Report 100-46, House Calendar No. 12.

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•*Sandpiper Key Condominium.* In May 1983, St Germain again agreed to purchase a condo at Lettelleir's suggestion. He ordered two small units, but "the developer" convinced him to buy a large townhouse instead for $190,000. An otherwise undocumented $19,000 down payment was "transferred from" the two small units. At the chairman's request, Florida Federal provided a 90-percent loan-to-value mortgage of $171,000 for thirty years at 12.5 percent (though he "requested" 12.25 percent) with $23,958 to complete escrow. The seller agreed to lease the unit for $2,500 monthly.

Upon settlement, a $17,000 "purchase rebate" materialized, though St Germain had contracted at $190,000. The committee avoided naming the generous seller, but page 524 identified real estate giant Arvida Corporation. The loan-to-value ratio was now 99 percent, but Florida Federal did not adjust the mortgage. If St Germain made a down payment, its return or application against the mortgage went unacknowledged by the committee. If not, the rebate conveniently reduced out-of-pocket costs to $7,000.

Arvida apparently did not adjust its $2,500 monthly lease either; given a new mortgage payment of $1,825, St Germain apparently cleared $675 a month. His 1985 disclosure incorrectly listed the purchase price as $90,000, but anything is possible. Its 1985 rental income was between $15,001 and $50,000. Did Arvida or Florida Federal offer similar opportunities to private citizens "interested in Florida real estate"?

The committee was "not persuaded that the facts that officials of Florida Federal were co-investors . . . or introduced Rep. St Germain to other Florida investments render the investments improper." It had not yet begun to manifest its determined resistance to all persuasion.

Rhode Island Real Estate

The Rhode Island opportunities offered by St Germain's first congressional campaign manager, prominent developer Roland O. Ferland, offer further proof of the value of "long-standing friendship." Note: the committee's tiresome repetition of "long-standing friend(ship)" reflected the absence from the congressional lexicon, until after its report was released, of the more inventive "constituent service" to explain very close, mutually rewarding relationships with powerful special interests, regardless of domicile. For this, at least, we will always be indebted to the Keating Five.

•*Four Seasons East Group.* In January 1971, general partner Ferland founded Four Seasons with five family members and St Germain as limited partners. In noncommittal phrasing, the committee wrote, "The congressman was to have contributed $3,000 for his 15 percent share." No documents authenticated an investment implying a $20,000 partnership valuation. In December 1980, St Germain sold thirteen-fifteenths of his 15-percent share to Ferland Corporation and Koffler Corporation for $185,000, for a blistering compound annual return of 53 percent.

To defer taxes on a capital gain triple his 1980 salary, St Germain accepted $1,850 cash and notes payable in 1981. The committee ignored Four Seasons' implicit valuation of $1.4 million in December 1980 and St Germain's sale of the remaining 2 percent for only $2,400 in February 1985. Had Four Seasons' value plunged 92 percent? Did Ferland and Koffler pay $185,000 for stock worth $15,600 in 1985? It appeared so. But buried among supplemental documents, a "clean" opinion by accounting firm Arthur Andersen revealed "partners' capital" of $1.1 million and 1984 income of $158,000. Was St Germain snookered? Was Four Seasons ever an *investment*, or was it something else?

St Germain's 1985 disclosure further muddied the waters, indicating Four Seasons limited partnership income of $5,001 to $15,000, *not* a $2,000 capital gain on the sold position. But wait: the 2 percent was still listed as a holding. As he signed these documents—knowing he was the subject of an inquiry—he presumably made every effort to minimize errors. What, then, accounts for them and the committee's inability to spot them? In February 1986, a year after the alleged final sale, St Germain received a $4,526 Four Seasons "nonpreferred distribution." The committee asked no questions, and, while noting a "long-standing friendship," concluded that no further action was warranted.

•*School Street Associates.* In 1975 (the committee received or provided no specifics), Ferland founded School Street with five Ferlands and St Germain as limited partners. St Germain reportedly acquired 20 percent for $2,000, implying a $10,000 partnership valuation. He reportedly loaned the partnership $16,000. In November 1985, School Street sold its real estate. The committee noted, "The congressman, to date, has received $21,200 as a partnership distribution of the proceeds from the sale to Famco as well as $16,000 in repayment of his 1980 and 1983 loans." St Germain's own disclosures contradicted it: 1985 School Street limited partnership income was $50,001 to $100,000. The committee missed this vast discrepancy and found no evidence suggesting that the investment "had any basis other than his friendship with Roland Ferland."

•*Parkview Associates.* Ferland founded Parkview in June 1976 with eight Ferlands, St Germain, and James A. O'Leary (the School Street filings' notary) as limited partners. "The congressman claims to have contributed $7,500 to obtain a 15-percent interest." St Germain received a "tax-free" distribution of $1,500 in December 1982; a "partnership distribution" of $24,000 in September 1983; three payments totalling $19,500 in 1984; "the first distribution for 1985" for $11,250 in March and a $120,000 check that September, "reflecting . . . proceeds of the new financing." All told, $176,250. The $131,250 in 1985 distributions contradicted his disclosure of only $15,001 to $50,000 in limited partnership income. The committee concluded that "the allegation of improper activity was not confirmed."

The House ethics committee was "not persuaded that the facts that officials of Florida Federal were co-investors . . . or introduced Rep. St Germain to other Florida investments render the investments improper."

In fifteen years, St Germain received $390,000 from the Ferland partnerships, a 31-fold return on unproven investments—*excluding* the alleged School Street loans. He retained 2 percent of Four Seasons, 15 percent of Parkview, and an indeterminate share of School Street. Though copies of investment checks occasionally surfaced elsewhere, none supported these partnerships or loans, despite subpoenas calling for "all checkbooks and passbooks maintained, cancelled checks, and bank savings and loan, and brokerage account statements, received by Rep. St Germain . . . from January 1, 1971 to date."

The committee ignored a particularly troubling characterization of the Ferland–St Germain relationship in the September 11, 1985, *Wall Street Journal*, which could not have escaped its attention:

> While the congressman used his growing political leverage . . . to help obtain federally subsidized housing for Rhode Island, Mr. Ferland became one of the state's biggest developers and operators of those projects. In the early 1970s, Mr. St Germain asked . . . to invest in some of Mr. Ferland's unsubsidized . . . developments. "I said, 'If something comes along, I hope you'll consider me,' " the congressman recalls. . . . Mr. Ferland . . . is a founder and behind-the-scenes power of the . . . National Association of Home Builders. The PAC donated to Rep. St Germain's lightly contested 1984 reelection campaign, helping to swell his current campaign war chest to $602,650, one of the biggest of any House member.

Had requests "to be considered" launched and sustained "long-standing friendships" with Ferland, the Florida Federal officials, and any number of others? Could developers dependent on federal housing projects or S&L executives subject to federal regulation afford to ignore such requests?

St Germain clearly rewarded his friends. The 1982 edition of *Politics in America* stated: "St Germain . . . used his senior position on the Banking Committee's Housing Subcommittee to blanket his district with housing projects for the elderly." Its 1987 edition noted "a talent at legislative hostage-taking" in a year-long battle with the Reagan Administration for housing as-

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sistance in return for an IMF bill. Reagan blinked, and St Germain won.

Ferland undoubtedly understood that federal spending on housing grew from $144 million to $11.1 billion between 1960 and 1987. The HUD budget grew from $12.7 to $18.9 billion during St Germain's tenure as bank committee chairman. And by the end of Freddy's ride, Rhode Island, forty-third most populous of the states, with less than a million people, ranked third among the fifty states and Washington, D.C., in 1988 HUD per capita spending.

•*International House of Pancakes.* Regarding St Germain's purchase of five International House of Pancakes (IHOP) restaurants in 1972 and 1973, the committee raised serious questions before finding the evidence "inconclusive."

In 1971, excessive debt forced International Industries, Inc. (III) to sell thirty-eight restaurants worth $10 million. Jerry Fisher, a law school classmate and "personal friend" of St Germain, was in charge of the III sales. Fisher and St Germain had renewed their friendship while Fisher was working with the Small Business Administration (SBA) in Washington. "In 1971, [Fisher] was phoning everyone he could think of," even St Germain, despite his ignorance of whether the congressman could afford to buy a restaurant, or five. Fisher did not explain his inability to sell thirty-eight properties at "net book value" to uncounted contacts from the SBA, law school, and IHOP franchisees.

An undated letter to "Fred" concerning two properties concluded: "Either way—time is of the essence," suggesting strong third-party interest. The committee also wrote, "In January 1972 III was negotiating with a national real estate broker to purchase $21 million worth of III property. By April 20, 1972, the broker offered to purchase nine New York pancake houses." Fisher's testimony notwithstanding, investors apparently competed for blocks of III properties.

The committee was unconcerned that the new chairman of the Bank Supervision and Insurance subcommittee had incurred $1.3 million in debt to finance five IHOPs on a $42,500 salary. It did not wonder whether IHOP debt or managerial distractions had compromised St Germain's ability to fulfill his increased responsibilities.

"The Committee focused on whether the congressman improperly used the influence of his office to secure . . . financing." It noted that Fleet National Bank and Rhode Island Hospital Trust National Bank were federally chartered and FDIC-backed and that Old Stone Bank was FDIC-insured. State-chartered, state-insured, and state-regulated, Marquette Credit Union was never subject to federal regulation or, by extension, improper influence. Even in Marquette's case, however, questions of "influence" could not have been so simple. Surely, House subcommittee chairmen can influence institutions across federal, state, and local lines.

Leaving "influence" aside, the committee posed two other questions: Were the loans sound? Were transactions properly disclosed? In hindsight, the first question must be answered affirmatively but the second raised issues involving: (1) relationships between III and St Germain; (2) purchase agreements falsely inflating selling prices through phantom brokerage fees; (3) favorable bank loan adjustments and/or recasts; and (4) disclosure lapses.

By the end of Freddy's ride, Rhode Island, forty-third most populous of the states, with less than a million people, ranked third among the fifty states and Washington, D.C., in 1988 HUD per capita spending.

The Crepe Trust

Crepe was established in February 1972 with $29,000 "seed money" borrowed from Fleet National Bank. St Germain was president and sole beneficiary; the late Michael A. Abatuno, his attorney, was the first of four trustees. Between March 1972 and March 1973, Crepe purchased five IHOPs for $1.3 million with two loans from Fleet National Bank, and one each from Old Stone Bank, Rhode Island Hospital Trust National Bank, and Marquette Credit Union.

•*Purchase Agreements and IHOP Pricing.* III padded the "net book value" of each of St Germain's IHOP purchase agreements by 5 percent to accommodate alleged brokerage commissions. In turn, the purchase agreements were presented to banks to obtain loans. In the purchase of two IHOP restaurants in Providence and Cranston, Rhode Island, a 4-percent down payment/"owner equity" reflected unpaid commissions. St Germain sought 100-percent financing for units in Richardson, Texas; Bronx, New York; and Wheaton, Maryland.

In March and April 1972 "for valuable consideration," William Halliwell released Crepe from $41,500 in commissions due him according to the Providence, Cranston, and Richardson purchase agreements. He played no role in the transactions and did not explain the "consideration," though he would serve as Crepe trustee from December 1973 to April 1976. He denied under oath any knowledge of $27,300 in forgiven commissions involving the Bronx and Wheaton IHOPs.

Adjusted for $68,500 in phantom commissions, the five IHOPs cost $1.3 million, $7,100 less than loans provided, before $7,700 in adjustments paid Crepe on transfer of the Providence and Cranston properties. No adjustments were detailed for the other three properties. The loans were secured by assignment to the lenders of rents from III, which leased back all five restaurants. The committee acknowledged that the Providence and Cranston purchase agreements gave lenders "misimpression(s)" of a 4-percent equity investment. In a "legal analysis" of the commissions, it wrote, "the statement contained in each purchase agreement [recognizing Halliwell as the broker] was not correct." Nor was III's agreement to reduce St Germain's price by 5 percent "in consideration" for his assumption of brokerage fees, because no such consideration existed.

St Germain deftly, and falsely, attributed "the Rube Goldberg approach" to Abatuno, "a general practitioner and not a real estate specialist." St Germain considered himself a "real estate neophyte" but neglected to explain why a neophyte would purchase five restaurants without obtaining legal advice from a specialist. In suggesting his was an arm's-length relationship with Crepe, he clearly prevaricated.

Given his sixteen years as a lawyer and his eleven as a congressman, it is inconceivable that St Germain had been manipulated by a conveniently deceased attorney. On several occasions, he initiated transactions before Crepe became involved. His relationship with Fisher made the purchases possible and four were underway *before* Crepe was established. He was twice referred to on loan applications as Crepe's president, most likely to take advantage of his position. He wrote Old Stone president Robert Stevens requesting "100 percent financing" for the Bronx and Richardson IHOPs. He approached Rhode Island Hospital Trust for a loan on the Bronx property which Old Stone had rejected. (No formal application was required; the loan was approved.) He met Marquette Credit Union president Charles Leveille to request a 100-percent loan for the Wheaton IHOP. No paperwork was required. In "a special Saturday session" at Marquette, a loan $900 larger than that requested was approved.

In January 1973, Fleet National Bank "unilaterally reduced the interest rate [on the Providence and Cranston loans] to 7.5 percent . . . with the mortgage payment to remain the same," reducing annual interest expense by some $27,000. A bank representative testified that "falling interest rates" precipitated the reduction, but the committee quoted Federal Reserve sources indicating rates were *rising*, then dropped the subject. In 1975, Fleet "recast" both loans, extending them five years at 8 percent and reducing St Germain's monthly payments by $1,020. All five IHOP loans had been extended two to six years by 1977.

St Germain personally requested the Richardson, Bronx, and Wheaton loan recasts, explaining in the last case that lower payments would allow him to pay his taxes. And, finally, St Germain and his wife personally guaranteed notes on all but Old Stone's Richardson loan, where no guarantee was required. His encounters with lenders again raised an unanswered specter of "influence." How does one deny a request by a

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House banking subcommittee chairman for "100 percent financing" or a loan recast? (Old Stone Bank rejected one loan but approved another.) And what did lenders expect in return for generous and flexible terms on $1.3 million? The committee also "considered whether the congressman knowingly made false statements . . . influencing . . . federally insured banks," in violation of U.S.C. Section 1014. Although aforementioned "misimpressions" clearly influenced the banks, the committee found the evidence inconclusive.

•*Comparisons.* While reviewing an Old Stone loan, the committee "analyzed" nine allegedly comparable loans and concluded St Germain's Texas loan (and, by implication, all five) "did not represent an aberration." True enough, given size, term, and rate, but *not* as a ratio of loan amount to "total economic value" (including land, improvements, and capitalized net income) where the nine examples ranged from 50 to 80 percent. This comparison was not made, probably because St Germain's loan-to-price ratio was 100.5 percent.

•*Disclosure.* The committee found that "St Germain consistently understated—by more than a million dollars," the restaurants' market value. He blamed a House staffer who advised that if "a filer cannot reasonably ascertain the fair market category of value," book value would suffice. Nice try, but the committee noted he was fully aware of market value, having stated it as $1.8 million on a January 1983 mortgage application and having sold the Providence unit for $470,000 in December 1984. The erstwhile neophyte again had demonstrated a penchant for applying contradictory interpretations of the rules to serve his purpose: obtaining mortgage approval on one hand, avoiding full disclosure on the other. The committee concluded: "This undervaluation violated House Rule XLIV and the Ethics in Government Act of 1978." It added that he failed to recognize a $270,000 note dated December 31, 1984, and payable January 2, 1985, as income or a holding in 1984. Both matters were blamed on "misapplication of advice." Neither was pursued.

What the Ethics Committee Missed

The committee missed dozens of disclosure inconsistencies, including:

•*Interest income.* A Commerce Savings CD worth between $50,001 and $100,000 generated only $1,001 to $2,501 in interest. A Shearson money market account with $100,001 to $250,000 produced only $2,501 to $5,000. A GIT money market account generated $5,001 to $15,000 in interest but was worth only $5,001 to $15,000 at year-end. City Savings, Mercury Savings, Rhode Island Hospital Trust, and Wright Patman Congressional Federal Credit Union accounts earned $3,501 to $9,500 but were not listed as holdings. Some accounts were partially invested and/or subject to rollovers. Though the amounts were not trivial, the question was not raised.

•*Net worth.* The committee was not curious as to how a colleague whose congressional salary averaged $45,000 from 1961 to 1985 amassed a portfolio yielding $450,000 to $800,000 in 1985 unearned income. St Germain's disclosed securities, real estate, and other holdings, less underlying debt, were worth $1.7 to $2.2 million in 1985, excluding homes in Woonsocket and Newport, Rhode Island; Washington, D.C.; and St. Petersburg, Florida.

•*Securities trading.* An affinity for short-term stock trading also went unremarked. Ten securities bought and sold during 1985 were held an average of ninety-three days. Several were legislation-sensitive. His purchase of Storer Communications warrants on April 24, 1985, was most noteworthy. On April 25, Storer accepted a $1.6 billion leveraged buyout offer. St Germain sold some or all warrants on April 26, gaining 10 percent in forty-eight hours. One man's prescience is another's insider trading: the SEC and federal prosecutors eventually focused on Storer warrant transactions (among others) in investigations of convict Mike Milken and bankrupt corporate felon Drexel Burnham Lambert. What did St Germain know? How did he know it? Why didn't the committee notice, or care?

The committee ignored $120,000 invested in tax shelters, generating more than $400,000 in write-offs and found "abusive" by the IRS. It ignored his lavish entertainment by S&L lobbyists and other special interests, in flagrant violation of congressional gift rules and federal law. On one occasion, St Germain treated several guests to a dinner he openly charged to an absent lobbyist's credit card. But he was quite a host in his own right, inviting an S&L lobbyist along on the 1980 congressional all-nighter which boosted deposit insurance and rocked the S&Ls. Results of a grand jury investigation into his entertainment by special interests were referred to the committee in 1988. It did nothing. A *Washington Post* lawsuit made public the grand jury's findings of "substantial evidence of serious and sustained misconduct."

The Congressional Ethics Bailout

Voting 12-0, the committee shrugged it all off: "Certain allegations were not sustained by clear and convincing evidence." One gift flight and assorted reporting deficiencies "do not rise to such level warranting further action." Democrats Dixon, Vic Fazio, Bernard Dwyer, Alan Mollohan, Joseph Gaydos, and Chester Atkins were joined by Republicans Floyd Spence, John Myers, James Hansen, Charles Pashayan, Thomas Petri, and Larry Craig in the whitewash. (All but Pashayan remain in Congress—Craig as senator from Idaho.) Arguing that "it would be inappropriate to attribute improper action . . . based solely on inference," the committee evinced an unmistakable pattern of its own, thoroughly discrediting itself by: (1) delays serving St Germain at the expense of the nation; (2) restrictions on "outside counsel"; (3) an inept, or nonexistent, review of documents; (4) avoidance of material issues, including abusive tax shelters and entertainment by lobbyists; (5) ignoring business relationships between "long-standing friends" and the federal government; (6) disregarding real estate purchase agreements intended to deceive lenders; (7) containing the inquiry within the bounds of press allegations; and—most importantly—(8) failing independently to recognize and address a single allegation, despite thirteen years of questionable conduct by St Germain. We have every reason to suspect that the ethics committee's conclusions on the case of St Germain were written before its inquiry began.

Twenty-eight years after he was first elected to Congress, St Germain lost his bid for a fifteenth term, as Republican Ronald K. Machtley took 56 percent of the vote in a solidly Democratic district. St Germain left office worth $2 million (ninth highest among congressional retirees) and with a $57,000 congressional pension, complete with cost-of-living adjustments. He pocketed $250,000 in campaign contributions largely provided by the financial-industry interests he had served so well. And there was, of course, the multi-million-dollar nest-egg hatched with the help of "long-standing friends." Perhaps fearing that the pension, PAC pot, and portfolio would prove insufficient to his needs, St Germain spent no time moping in defeat. He returned to Washington in 1989 to establish St Germain, Rodio & Ursillo, Ltd. to lobby Congress for a client list that included at least one S&L. □

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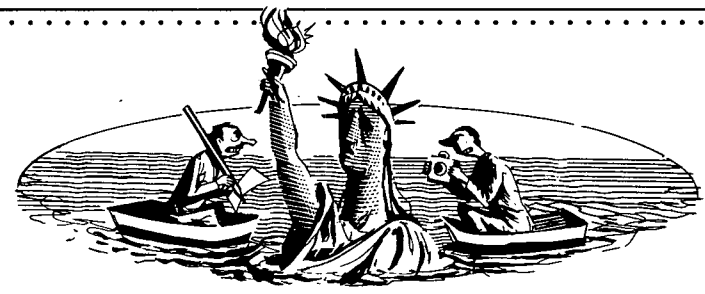

A PROFESSION IN DECLINE

by Terry Eastland

Boston

The American Society of Newspaper Editors (ASNE) gathered here for its annual meeting in order to celebrate, as signs everywhere put it, "the First," as in the First Amendment, whose 200th anniversary occurs later this year. But the tenor of the sessions bespoke a certain depression about the news business. The recent Gulf War, a bad one for the media, led one editor to ask Brig. Gen. Richard I. Neal, of Persian Gulf briefing fame, just what could be done about "anti-media prejudice," evidently the latest form of discrimination. The mood didn't improve when Ross Perot was asked about how the media had changed. "I liked you more rough-and-tumble, not blow-dried in $500 suits." The editors, having just swallowed a $55 lunch, at least chuckled. As it happened, it was their luck to have scheduled an evening reception in the John Fitzgerald Kennedy Library on Columbia Point at a time when all the talk in the news centered on the Kennedy boys' Good Friday fun in Palm Beach.

Perhaps more than anything else, America's newspaper editors are worried about whether their business will even survive the coming years, and if so in what form. While the profit margins of some newspapers remain the envy of many other businesses, they have been declining, and industry leaders fear the trend is irreversible.

For three decades daily U.S. newspaper circulation has remained flat—at 61 to 62 million copies—even as the number of U.S. households has almost doubled. Today market penetration stands at 67 percent—less than half the figure at the end of World War II. In 1967 three-quarters of all adults polled said they read a paper; now only half do. And only 28 percent of younger adults (ages 18-29) bother to pick up a daily, according to a poll conducted by the National Opinion Research Center. This last figure is particularly distressing to industry executives, for researchers claim that most people who acquire the newspaper habit do so early in life. The future looks bad enough that America's newspaper editors might have to forgo meeting at places like the $150-a-night Westin Hotel on Copley Place.

ASNE sponsored some research on readership and unveiled the results at the annual meeting. "Keys to Our Survival," as the glossy report is titled, suggests that of the 45 percent of American adults who don't read newspapers daily, more than half—26 percent—just might acquire the habit if newspapers change their ways. "Keys" identifies half of that 26 percent as "at-risk" readers, half as "potential" readers. The at-risks identified themselves as "harried" and unable to control events around them; they didn't find newspapers at all useful in their daily lives, which tended to revolve around local events. The potentials thought of themselves as busy but not harried; they were interested in hard news, including national stories, but weren't convinced that newspapers were the best way to get their news. The majority of both at-risks and potentials were under 35, likely to work full-time, and more likely than "loyal" readers to be transients in their communities.

The survey research suggested ways of attracting at-risks and potentials: no stories that begin on one page and "jump" to another; more graphics; indexing of advertising; and more use of tabloid sections. Six newspapers developed prototype papers, which ASNE distributed to the 500 editors and their spouses gathered here.

A speaker predicted that, if newspapers were to incorporate some of the ideas from the prototypes, they could increase circulation by as much as eight percent. That promises to be no easy task, if only because at-risks and potentials often want different things from their newspapers, while long-time readers may not want what either of them want. And even if some of the ideas "work," in the sense of attracting new readers while keeping old ones, there is the unsettling question of just what a newspaper is nowadays.

The common culture that newspapers (and many other institutions) could once assume no longer exists. For a variety of reasons, it has been disintegrating since World War II, and the trend is only bound to continue, presaging further loss of readership for newspapers. Editors and publishers have occasionally tried to change their product to fit the changing times—keeping up with television, for example, the main news source for younger people—with indifferent results. California's *Orange County Register* now covers shopping malls, plumbing such throbbing questions as which malls have the best bathroom facilities.

Several editors expressed a preference for traditional newspapers, i.e., those that feature international, national, state, and local news, with a heavy emphasis on politics and government. ASNE President Burl Osborne, editor and publisher of the *Dallas Morning News*, took note that newspaper readership went up during the crisis in the Persian Gulf. He observed, with intended irony, that the crisis showed what could happen to newspaper circulation when newspapers actually publish news.

It does not follow, however, that if newspapers were to publish news, as traditionally defined, more papers would be bought. Interest in newspapers depends on the *kind* of news published, and war news is maximally interesting. I'll bet that the number of newspapers that truly major in such news, with in-depth reporting and analyses, will dwindle to a handful, and that most of these will have national (the *New York Times*) or at least large regional (the *Miami Herald*) circulations. For better or worse, we live in an age when more and more newspaper editors, especially in smaller markets, will decide that news, as the editor of a Wisconsin daily told his staff, is "what our readers say it is." In other words, what at-risks, potentials, and other such market constructs say it is.

Thirteen years ago ASNE set the year 2000 as the deadline by which it hoped the percentage of minority journalists on the job would reflect the percentage of minorities in the general population. This quota (let us not mince words) has proved elusive. The number of minority journalists increased more in 1990 than in any year since 1978, yet only 8.72 percent of all newspaper journalists today are black, Hispanic, Asian, or American Indian; according to the 1990 census, those minorities now make up roughly 25 percent of the population. ASNE devoted an entire panel to the question, "Why Isn't There More Progress in Minority Hiring?"

Carole Simpson of ABC News moderated what proved a rainbow panel: three blacks, a Hispanic, an Asian, and one white. She claimed that race relations were deteriorating nationwide, and noted with alarm that some editors, in responding to an ASNE questionnaire on minority hiring, had responded, "None of your damned business," and

Terry Eastland is resident fellow at the Ethics and Public Policy Center in Washington, D.C.

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"I'm tired of this bull----." Presumably, no such editor had been invited to be a panelist. Ironically, in a speech on the meeting's last day, ASNE President Osborne deplored the advent of political correctness on college campuses and sharply criticized attempts to limit freedom of speech. But the Simpson panel, organized by ASNE, was as politically correct as any college colloquium on affirmative action. (Further irony: in his anti-PC speech Osborne revealed no irony at all when he turned around to urge the editors to plow on toward proportional representation.)

Dorothy Gilliam of the *Washington Post* spoke for the other panelists when she said: "Don't just talk the talk of diversity, but walk the walk of diversity." "Multiculturalism" was another catch phrase. It was assumed that minority qualifications were never problematic, that "people of color" had to be "better" than whites in order to be hired and promoted, and that the number of minorities hired and promoted should be the same as for non-minorities. It was also assumed that "diversity," which is code for a color other than white, is a qualification, in the sense that being Hispanic, say, enables a Hispanic reporter to understand and report on Hispanic communities, it being understood that a white reporter would be disabled by his whiteness from doing that job as well, if at all. "Diversity," thus defined, turned out to be a crucial part of a commercial argument; for newspapers to survive, they must reach minority communities, and to do that they need minority journalists. "The lives of newspapers depend on diversity," said one panelist. "Readership is our biggest issue," said another, "and the diversity is the key to readership." Yet another said: "We need people who look like and think like our readers." As for "reverse discrimination," Simpson asked one panelist about that, in a way that suggested there could be no such problem; such a charge, the editors learned, is referred to a "pluralism committee."

One Kentucky editor said his attempt to hire a young Hispanic from another state was rejected on grounds that his city had very few Hispanics. What's a diversity-conscious editor to do? The panel advised him to "grow his own minorities." Evidently, he would have to limit his crop to black journalists, since he had few Hispanics around town but presumably a sizable black community. No one touched on the question of whether an editor is supposed to hire a Hispanic in order to reach Hispanic communities (as the "diversity" argument commands) or simply on grounds that the person has, if one can allude to the notion anymore, superb qualifications. Another editor wondered about how you keep minority journalists around since they're always getting hired away by bigger papers.

Afterwards, as I rode up in the hotel elevator with Simpson, she asked me how I thought the panel went. "I thought you could have used more diversity," I replied. She seemed unsure precisely what I meant, though she sensed I was not with the program. Here is what I meant: A decent respect for diversity of views (another ASNE value) would have required including on the panel an editor with the views of a Thomas Sowell (who has destroyed the premises of affirmative action in a series of books) or a Shelby Steele (who has destroyed the notion of racial "entitlement"). Surely there are such journalists around. Howard Kurtz of the *Washington Post* seemed to find one in Linda Wallace, who is black and works for the *Philadelphia Inquirer.* In a story after the ASNE meeting, Kurtz quoted Wallace as saying, "Quotas take away from people's perception of our excellence." Inclusion of a reporter like Wallace or an editorial-page opponent of racial preferences would have given the panel a "diversity" corresponding to the debate that is taking place across the country.

ASNE adopted its year-2000 goal in 1978, the same year that saw the Su-

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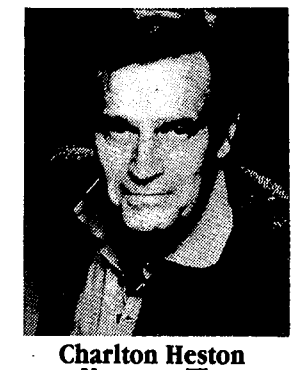

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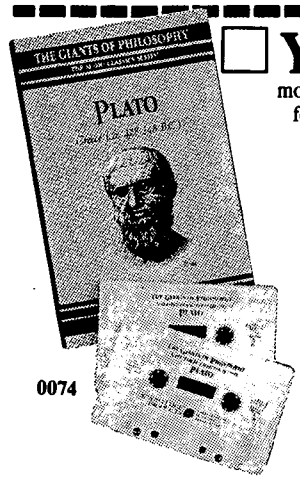

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preme Court decide the famous *Bakke* case. The key opinion in that case was Justice Lewis Powell's. Powell justified the use of race in graduate admissions with a "diversity" rationale based on First Amendment considerations. Little did he know that in time the newspaper industry would pick up on his idea and use "diversity" to cover a multitude of personal (and personnel) sins. Not least among them is duplicity. One of the panelists let slip a reference to a newspaper's "racial hiring policy." Everyone else said "diversity policy."

In his speech, Burl Osborne noted that censorship on the college campus today will be censorship in the newsroom tomorrow. Yet it is the "diversity" movement that has helped promote the climate of PC censorship on the college campus. Each day of the convention a "multicultural" staff of college students put out a paper for the participants. I was far from persuaded that these students would allow their campus newspapers to dissent from the orthodoxy on affirmative action that ASNE so solidly, and uncritically, pushes. And apart from the politics (and censorship) they will bring to America's editorial offices, there is the present to consider, with many of those offices operating under racial-hiring policies. There is a 50 percent minority hiring quota, or "goal," at the *Philadelphia Inquirer.* One in every four hires at the *Washington Post* must be a minority. And every other hire at the *New York Times* must be a minority. Ponder these facts when reading these papers' stories on affirmative action.

In the wake of the Persian Gulf War, a variety of speakers were brought to Boston to talk on matters of war and peace. CNN's Peter Arnett was a luncheon speaker. He was preceded by the Rev. Wintley Phipps, pastor of a Seventh Day Adventist church in Washington, D.C. Rev. Phipps was a fixture of the ASNE program, having been asked, thanks to a pair of wonderfully deep and compelling vocal chords, to provide First Amendment "minutes," as they were called, at various points. Each time the Rev. Phipps came forward to provide a First Amendment "minute," consisting of a reading from some sage like John Stuart Mill or Thomas Jefferson, you could hear the hush settle over the crowd of editors; this was as close to a worship service as ASNE could have provided.

At the lunch featuring Peter Arnett, the Rev. Phipps chose to read a text by Isaiah Thomas, not of Pistons' but Patriot fame—Thomas was a journalist during the Revolutionary War. In the text, Thomas talked about the bad things British troops had done to "our countrymen," as he called them. Phipps picked these words because for some strange reason Arnett evidently reminded him of Thomas. Thus he praised Arnett for his Thomas-like "passion for objectivity." Arnett accepted this encomium without quibble. It would have been impolite to point out that CNN and Arnett strove not for the kind of objectivity that might include side-taking among nations (presumably Thomas's kind), but for the neutrality that explicitly denies being on anyone's side. ("Our countrymen" or its equivalent was not in Arnett's Baghdad vocabulary.) The question Arnett did not address in his speech here concerns CNN's vaunted above-all-nations neutrality, for which, by the way, David Frost frosted Arnett in a recent Washington appearance.

Amazingly, Arnett presented himself as though he had been, well, one of "our countrymen" in uniform. Pulling out a large American flag (sent to him, he said, by some admirer who had flown it every day in strangely incongruous support of both U.S. troops and CNN's Baghdad crew), he unfurled it over the podium, right there in front of the lunching editors. "America, I've got that feeling . . . you like me," Arnett remarked. Here was a sight for Saddam Hussein to see, and for Americans who followed Arnett's coverage to ponder. Arnett, needless to say, now has an agent and an assistant, and is sifting through book and other opportunities.

A winner of one of ASNE's First Amendment Awards was retired Justice William J. Brennan, who was said to have "reaffirmed through law the vision of the Founding Fathers." That, of course, is subject to debate, but Brennan is a hero among the media, not only for his free-press opinions but also for those that torqued the Bill of Rights and other parts of the Constitution into coercively libertarian documents.

A media conference celebrating the First Amendment would have been incomplete without a Brennanesque study on same. ASNE commissioned one. The study took the form of a poll—a survey of public attitudes toward free press and free expression generally. The results disappointed the survey authors. "If American voters were asked to ratify the Bill of Rights today, freedom of the press would not likely be included." But American voters aren't asked that question, and if they *were* asked it in a constitutional context—that of ratification—it's far from clear what the survey results would hold. Besides, now isn't then; in 1789, the First Amendment applied only to the federal government. (The states weren't covered until this century, when, by judicial fiat, the provisions of the First began to be applied to them.)

The Brennan-like premises of the survey authors reflected the premises of the ASNE leadership, if not most of the editors here. A panel on "Testing the Limits" of the First Amendment was stacked in favor of "First Amendment absolutists," as its moderator, Ellen Goodman, said most news types are. There was Dennis Barrie, director of the Cincinnati museum hauled into court for its Mapplethorpe exhibition, Nadine Strossen, president of the American Civil Liberties Union, and, all by himself as the liberals' ideal stereotype of a conservative, the Rev. Donald Wildmon of the American Family Association. The discussion proceeded as I expected, with Barrie able to present himself as an expert on art, with Strossen able to present herself as the sophisticate in law, and Wildmon able to, well, be Wildmon.

Wildmon did manage to make the point, agreed to by Strossen, that we are in the midst of a culture war. Strossen represented the view that freedom is an unalloyed good, and she denied that exposure to a book or movie, or presumably to anything, might lead to behavior civilized people might deplore, such as murder. Just weeks earlier *Newsweek* had run a cover story on how violence had gone mainstream, explicitly contradicting Strossen on the connection between, if you will, what you see and read and what you do. This, by the way, is a common-sensical connection found in literature as old as the Bible, which admonishes the reader (in the Proverbs) to "guard your heart, for it is the wellspring of life."

How useful it might have been had the ASNE leadership put together an ideologically balanced panel of true equals that would have addressed not so much the limits of the First Amendment but rather the nature of the culture war that is raging in our country, thanks in no small part to the case law (a good bit of it written by First Amendment laureate Brennan) that has prevented communities from governing themselves in ways that at least do not undermine the possibility of living in accord with traditional moral precepts.

On the first day of the conference the editors went to school at Harvard, picking from a menu of offerings. One of the best attended and most talked about was "The Moral Life of the Young," by Robert Coles. Coles probed the conditions of a society that has been so shot through with hedonism that the moral life of young people has become a problem. A big problem, because what kids don't have and badly need, said Coles, in a persuasive (if depressing) presentation, is "a moral life." We pass out condoms in school, he noted, while ignoring the real need. (And we—as in "we editors"—editorialize; "Courage in Condoms" was the headline of a recent *Boston Globe* editorial.)

I thought of Coles's lecture as I sat through the closing sessions that gloried in the First Amendment without pausing to reflect on the social and moral costs of the rights revolution in our time. Perhaps some of the editors did the same. I don't know. I do know that the editors had the chance to take in some baseball at Fenway Park the next day. Relief, just in time. □

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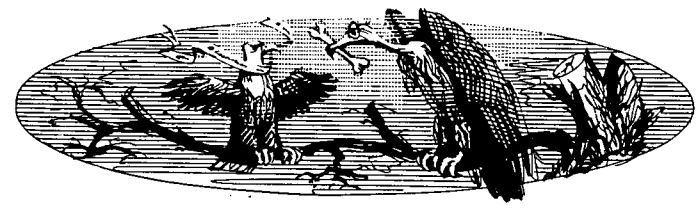

VIPER'S NESTS

by Benjamin J. Stein

Wednesday

A trip up to the Port Hueneme Naval Air Station to Do My Bit. I had read that there was a support group there for the children of sailors in the Persian Gulf. I called the base chaplain and offered my humble services as a micro-celebrity. He accepted, so off I go in my Acura to do good.

The base sprawls (as bases will) by the ocean in Ventura County and would make a fabulous planned community, except that it already is a planned community. I drove through the gates—manned by private-contract guards who snap off crisp salutes—just as the flag was being lowered. Three sailors stood at attention. "Taps" was being played, and sailors, wives, children, and I stood still as its notes wafted over the dusk. It touched me to think of this different race of patriots and protectors, living by a code of self-sacrifice so that the rest of us can be as mean-spirited and selfish as we wish.

There were about forty kids in the support group, ranging in age from eight to fifteen. About two-thirds of the kids were black or brown. My little sociological mind was churning as I talked to the kiddies. The white ones seemed basically satisfied with their lives. Most of them said they wanted to go into the Navy, just like Mom and Dad. The brown kids seemed to be thinking it over. The black kids wanted to go into show business, to sing, to dance, to make lots of money, to ride in limousines.

One lively black boy of about ten said he wanted to go into Los Angeles to see the "ruthless rappers of Compton," which is a scary neighborhood downtown. "But," he said, "I hear there are gangsters there and if I go there I'll get shot in the head." Several other kids nodded and agreed that they would like to visit Los Angeles, but that it was probably too dangerous to do so. I reassured them that their main worry was thieves who steal with a fountain pen and a contract, but that did not make much of an impression.

Amazingly, they seemed only somewhat familiar with my fabulous TV show, "The Wonder Years," but they knew each and every detail of a commercial I had done for Chips Ahoy Sprinkles, and I mean every word and every gesture. What am I to make of that?

Thursday

A grueling day, as I gave a deposition about a movie mogul and his apparent breaches of duty to his stockholders and other investors. It would be far too time-consuming to describe the case, except to say that it's about fun and games that the mogul apparently played with about $100 million of OPM. He did it, as they always do, with the help of accountants at a major national firm.

Do not think for even a moment that accounting is dull. It's not. The dull facade is carefully cultivated to keep outsiders unaware of what is really going on under the green eyeshades. In a nutshell, taking is what's going on. Creating bogus entries that allow bad people to own homes in Bel-Air and Lakeville. Society snickers at the accountants, who just look sheepish and then go home and squirrel away another few billion.

Of course, I do not mean all of the accountants. Just the ones at the big national firms.

It's sort of fun to be at depositions. A clever-looking woman lawyer asks you cagey questions meant to impugn your expertise. A stenographer yells at you not to talk over the question. You get to sit in a hot, stuffy conference room for a whole day. And you feel afraid that you might be saying something that will completely wreck the stockholders' case.

My interlocutor this day was a woman so intense that I repeatedly started to laugh. I was mostly laughing with joy and thanks to God that I was not doing her job, that at the end of the deposition I could leave and go about my business and not have to spend the next day inside that room with her and her colleagues.

As I studied the relentless countenance before me, I thought of the fraud that had been sold to women about how glamorous and great it would be for them to be lawyers. If they had only known. If they had only had a clue of what law was like, they would have lynched Betty Friedan and Gloria Steinem and Tai-Grace Atkinson.

Men's jobs are difficult. Women's jobs are difficult. Work is difficult. That's why it's called work. For women to have been sold that bill of goods that men's work is somehow not work and just fun and games—wow. That's real fraud. How long will it be until there is a class action against the National Organization for Women?

The host firm brought in sandwiches for lunch. Turkey. Sausage. Roast beef.

"I am sorry," I said, "but I don't eat meat. I will not live on the eating of the flesh of my fellow animals."

She looked thoughtful and then said, "What about your shoes? Aren't they leather?"

"Yes, but I'm not planning to eat my shoes," I said.

"But they are from dead animals, are they not?" she persisted.

"Yes, but these cows, the ones who supplied the leather for my shoes, committed suicide after lengthy soul-searching and shame caused by their breaches of fiduciary duty towards their fellow cattle."

Even my interlocutor seemed to be amused and almost laughed, and then caught herself and looked dour.

When I left the office building, I actually was singing. "Oh, happy day, when I left the practice of law . . . "

Friday

A busy afternoon writing about ethical lapses among management. I'm glad I chose this field. I will never run out of material and I will never run out of anger and I will never run out of typing paper, so I'm all set.

A call from my agent about a tryout for a part as a cruel divorce lawyer in a new show about—surprise!—divorce lawyers. It's all a thrill. I was summoned to read a part in which I grill a divorce plaintiff about why she posed nude, with her legs indelicately positioned, for a portrait painted by a man who soon became her co-respondent (if there even are co-respondents any longer). I get to say, or at least hear, the deathless exchange:

WIFE: Yeah, but I'm the one out there with her legs spread for the whole world to see.

LAWYER: Madame, all of us have our legs spread in one way or another. You did it voluntarily.

Later, before dinner, I moseyed down Sunset Strip with Trixie on her leash to pick up my script so that I could prepare for my role. It was about 7:00 p.m., and the Strip was dead. The throngs who would come later were still in Pacoima

Benjamin J. Stein is a writer and actor living in Malibu, California. His new novel, Will You Still Love Me Tomorrow?, *has just been published by St. Martin's Press.*

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shining up their Camaros or in Encino talking on the phone.

It's hard to believe just how lonely I felt as I walked down the Strip, which, in a way, has been my home for about fifteen years. I passed by Tower Records, its windows filled with posters advertising frighteningly vacant, violent-looking people of every race. I passed by a tattoo shop with a fat man holding a terrifying instrument and staring at the pimply back of a pale young woman. I passed a palm-reading salon. Then a store that sold spangly mini-skirts and blouses. Then another that sold leather dresses. Then a Thai restaurant and a Mexican restaurant and a Chinese restaurant. Then a dealer who sold Ferraris and Lamborghinis. Outside, a homeless man carrying two brimming paper bags stared at a red Testarossa.

I passed Gazzari's, a rock club that is usually deserted at this hour. Tonight, however, it had a surprisingly well-dressed knot of men, young, middle-aged, maybe a little beyond middle-aged. With them were a gaggle of skimpily dressed women. Some wore see-through blouses. Others wore see-through skirts. One wore jeans with the fly open to very low on her abdomen.

"*O tempora, o mores,*" I thought, and averted my eyes until a man in a tuxedo said, "Ben, Ben Stein, I love reading about your life in the *Spectator.*"

The man, as it turned out, was a freelance writer himself. He was waiting in front of Gazzari's for the "X-Rated Film Fan Club Awards."

"Why don't you come inside, too," he asked. "I can get you a ticket."

"Well, I have plans for tonight," I said.

He nodded and then grabbed a large man about my age (46) and pulled him over. "Ted, Ted," he said, "this is Ben Stein, the guy you like so much on 'The Wonder Years.' "

"Yeah, great, man," the large fellow said. "I love your work. Hey, do you ever see me? I've been in X-rated since before it was X-rated. I've been in fifty f--- films, usually as the main guy doing the main scenes."

"Well, I haven't really seen as many of those movies as I should," I said. "But I'm sure you were really great."

"Hey," the large man went on, "I am so sorry that my lady friend Viper isn't here. She loves 'Wonder Years.' "

"Well, maybe some other time I'll meet Viper."

"Do you know her work?" the man asked. (That's what actors say. We describe our acting as "work.")

"I'm not sure I do. What's her last name? Viper What?"

"Just Viper," the man said. "But even if you don't know her face, you'd recognize her body. She's the one with the 38 double-Ds and the whole-body tattoo. It's sort of her trademark."

"Well, I'll keep my eye out for her. I'm sure she's very memorable."

"In the meantime, maybe you'd like to meet some of these ladies," the man said. With one meaty arm he swept three women towards me in various states of undress. "This is Mallory and this is Valhalla and this is Scorpion," he said. They all looked very nice and like they wouldn't kill me unless there was nothing worth watching on MTV.

Sunday

While the devil boy, the world's cutest human being, Tommy Stein, played with his war toys and watched the Ninja Turtles, I watched a show on KCET, our local PBS station, about John Gregory Dunne's Los Angeles. I have known John for sixteen or seventeen years now. He's an irascible fellow with a scarily sharp instinct for saying things that are really on target and embarrassing. But he was on his best behavior on the documentary. He took us viewers from downtown Los Angeles to the cliffs of Trancas, Malibu, literally right across from my little house, and showed us Los Angeles all along the way. We saw the Mexican-Americans and the rich Jews (a favorite theme of John's) and people in Lexus sedans, and all along John talked to us in his mellifluous voice. I was pretty startled at just how good a voice John has, to tell you the truth. The Irish all seem to have great voices.

While I heard the sounds of made-in-China microchip aerial combat toys coming from the devil boy's bedroom, my little, Nutrasweet-besotted mind ran wild. I'd love someday to host a show on PBS or somewhere else about some of the other Los Angeleses besides the tourist's Los Angeles. It's really a fascinating city for reasons other than that it's in a desert and has a lot of rich Jews who run show business.

First of all, Los Angeles is a city of permanent war, not of gangs or of hate crimes but of humans against their old selves, the nonstop guerrilla war of self-help. The fat want to be thin. The thin want to be super-thin. The weak want to be strong. The strong want to be monster-strong. The poor want to be rich. The rich want to be Milken-rich. Above all, the old want to be young.

The battles are fought openly in the sports clubs, gymnasiums, plastic surgeons' offices, boiler rooms, women's kick-boxing classes, martial arts seminars, and assertiveness-training centers of Los Angeles. There the old self is pulverized, carpet-bombed, nuked into shame and oblivion, and a new self is built on the ruins. But the war is devastating, and the old guerrilla self fights back. There is temporary peace between what is and what wants to be, a peace made of drugs and compulsive everything.

Then there is the Los Angeles of real peacemaking, of prayer by people who really mean it. The addicted want to be sober. The lost want to be found. The frightened want to be safe. That's the Los Angeles of twelve-step movements, which, contrary to some assertions, are unequivocally forms of group prayer. That's the Los Angeles of psychiatrists and psychologists and other people who seek to mend the broken shards of the self and put them back together.

For this war, the battlegrounds are the AA meetings, the Cocaine Anonymous meetings, the Schick Center, the Care Unit, LifeStarts, the psychiatrists' sanctums, the Crystal Cathedral, the TV set at 3:00 a.m. showing us this evangelist from Houston or Santa Ana. This is the one-day-at-a-time crawl into peace of mind, into the tortuous—sometimes torturous—process of making peace with oneself.

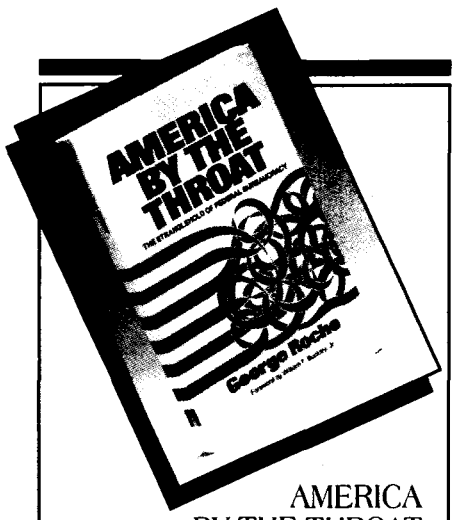
What other city is so engaged in the process of remaking the self day by day? This is the main industry of Los Angeles—not remaking real estate, not making movies, not even selling junk bonds. Getting rich, getting famous, getting thin is just technique. The real goal of life in L.A. is to emerge a new you. God help us.

Then there's the Los Angeles of the serving class. Los Angeles is a colonial city. The *hueros* with money employ legions of black- and mostly brown-skinned people to clean their toilets, wash their cars, feed their kids, clean up for them, and fade into invisibility. But they are not invisible to themselves. They have a whole giant life here, and it's not just the gangs and the booths on Olivera Street. It's a sort of anti-life of what the *hueros* are doing.

We *hueros* open the door for our maids, and then leave. The radio is set to a Spanish station. Maybe while we're gone they are having their boyfriends over, listening to our Nakamichi tape decks, doing funky things in our pools and jacuzzis. Then, when we come back, there they are, staring at the ironing and saying *nada.*

I have a fantasy of a valet taking the Bentley he parks for the film director, hurtling off to Oxnard to pick up his girlfriend, going to the film director's house on Broad Beach, having a party for two hundred of his pals, then cleaning it all up, returning to Geoffrey's just as the director finishes his cappucino, and delivering the car with a few servile words. Who's had the good time that night?

This is only a metaphor, but it's pretty buff for the Hispanics here. They aren't just washing dishes in kitchens: they're living like kings compared to how they lived in Zihuatenejo. You think the kid from Bensonhurst who got to be an agent and have blond girlfriends is a lucky fella? Check out the *pachuco* who didn't have running water and now parks Ferraris and has a color TV, and a girlfriend who does aerobics, and air conditioning, and MTV, and a club where they know to give him a Dos Equis as soon as he walks in the door. These people have a life, my friend. □



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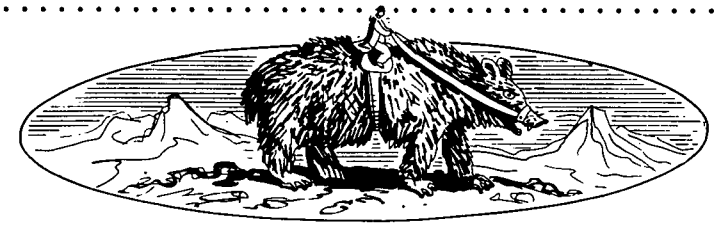

MR. PERSONALITY

by Cathy Young

Here is, courtesy of perestroika, a revolutionary way to measure political weight: in pounds and ounces (or kilos and grams). The March 8, 1991, issue of *Kuranty* ("Chimes"), the weekly newspaper of the Moscow City Council, reports that after Boris Yeltsin's TV speech calling for Gorbachev's resignation, the pro-Yeltsin telegrams received by Soviet Central TV weighed in at 20 kilos (44 lbs.), and anti-Yeltsin ones at 300 grams (10.5 oz.). Meanwhile, a March 13 dispatch by the recently founded Moscow-based News and Information Agency (ANI) says that local Communist party committees have mounted a campaign of letters and petitions condemning Yeltsin, using very creative methods:

> Police and fire squads have been coming to some villages and inspecting the villagers' homes. Finding violations [of fire safety rules, for example], they would write up reports and threaten to impose fines. They agreed to tear up the reports if the homeowners signed the required political statements.

Earlier, the news agency DU-Inform had reported instances of factory workers being offered food packages in exchange for anti-Yeltsin signatures. It's a classic carrot-and-stick method, but the CPSU's stick is wearing thin: from firing squad to fire inspection.

And what of the man of the hour himself? Does he harbor dictatorial ambitions? Is he a Gorby II? Some think so. I must confess I'm beginning to like the man. He may not be too refined, he may still have the bearing of a provincial party boss, and he may at times exaggerate his good-guy record. But he's saying all the right things, in a way Gorbachev never has. In a March 9 speech to democratic activists at the Cinema Center in Moscow (reprinted in several Soviet newspapers), Yeltsin mentioned an open letter in the hardline Communist/nationalist *Sovetskaya Rossiya*, accusing him of "leading Russia to capitalism": "It says I don't want to go forward, with everyone else, into our radiant future—forward to Communism. . . . That's right. I don't."

On March 14, *Komsomolskaya Pravda* published a "direct line" transcript of Yeltsin's call-in dialogue with people around the country, held on March 11 and advertised in the paper in advance. The very first caller inquired, "When are you going to croak?" to which Yeltsin gamely replied, "Oh, I've still got plenty of things to do." Of the thirty-five calls, seven were clearly hostile, thirteen supportive, and the rest neutral or unclear. Several Russians living in rebellious republics, or with relatives there, called to voice their anxieties. Yeltsin's reply: the best way to help ethnic Russians in such areas was not by tanks but by agreements between the governments of the republics, and he was already working on such agreements with Baltic leaders. A lady doctor so agitated that she finally hung up in mid-sentence berated Yeltsin for embracing "forces whose slogans are, 'Down with the Soviet socialist system,' and 'the Red scum have ruined Russia,' " and asked, "Why do you now persecute others for their convictions?" Yeltsin: "I'm not persecuting *anyone*. I believe that even among Communists, there are plenty of intelligent people and people who do not share the position of conservative forces." (My dream headline: "Soviet Leader Denies Anti-Communist Witchhunt.")

A perplexed small-town cop inquired, "on behalf of the whole precinct," if they should work according to the laws of the Russian republic or those of the Soviet Union. (No prizes guessing the answer.) A woman from Saratov asked caustically, "When you see your patriots at rallies and people applaud your every appearance, does that remind you of anything?" "It does," said Yeltsin, "and believe me, I find it unpleasant. Unfortunately, there's nothing I can do about it." (With no parallels intended, this is exactly what Stalin told foreign correspondents shocked by his personality cult: "I find it grating, but what can I do if the Russian people love me so much?") One of those overzealous admirers popped up next: "Is a people that tramples on its own reason and harasses intellectuals worthy of Yeltsin or of democracy?" Yeltsin replied, unwittingly echoing Brecht, that the government does not elect the people but vice versa, and added some nice things about the Russian people's great potential. Next caller: "Why are you so partial to the Jews?" Yeltsin, criticized by some liberals for not taking a stand against anti-Semitism, acquitted himself well, saying that he had never singled out any group and favored equal rights for all, and advising the caller to "try to judge people by other criteria than the nationality column in their passports."

This is not to say the Yeltsinites are models of tolerance. DU-Inform reports (April 2) that on April Fools' Day, a group of young anarchists wanted to

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Cathy Young is the author of Growing Up in Moscow *(Ticknor & Fields).*

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hold a mock rally ridiculing Yeltsin worshippers, with slogans demanding Yeltsin's canonization and his coronation as Russian Czar. When the anarchists started unpacking their props in a metro passageway, a crowd began to gather and the young people barely escaped a pummeling, though they did manage to hold their march after all. The nicest part of the tale is that, according to DU-Inform, the insults hurled at the anarchists included "Fascists!" and "Communists!"—the two words finally attaining, in the Russian mind, the equality they deserve.

Give Us Some Air!

In the meantime, the battle of Russia vs. Soviet leadership of the airwaves goes on. Early in March, Vladimir Pozner told me that, as of March 13, the Russian Federation was going to get six hours of airtime a day on Central TV's Channel 2 (see "Updating the Pozner File," *TAS*, May 1991). However, a March 25 report by Novosti News Agency says that the deputy chairman of the All-Union State Broadcasting Company, Valentin Lazutkin, told a meeting of journalists at the Moscow City Committee of the CPSU that regular broadcasting by the Russian TV company starting March 31 was in doubt, since the company was not ready for it. Referring to the Russian government's demand that Channel 2 be given to the republic—which is what Yeltsin claims Gorbachev had repeatedly promised him—Lazutkin alleged that several republics had threatened to stop broadcasting the channel if that were done. (He named only the Ukraine.) He also said that "as soon as the necessary questions are solved, Russian TV will get six hours *a week* to broadcast on Channel 2," leaving me wondering whether Pozner had misled me. To make it even more confusing, the weekly *Kommersant* reported (March 25-April 1) that at a March 28 press conference at the Soviet Cinematographers' Union, a spokesman for the Russian Broadcasting Company, Vitaly Maksimov, said Russian TV would start broadcasting six hours *a day* on April 15.

A more turbulent picture of the Russian-Soviet media wars was painted by the infamous Leonid Kravchenko, the State Broadcasting Company chief presiding over the crackdown on glasnost on the airwaves (see "Saving Face," *TAS*, April 1991) and known in the radical press as "the executioner of glasnost." My Moscow friend Dmitry Starostin was present at Kravchenko's March 21 meeting with deputies of legislatures at the Ostankino TV tower (where, he notes, police were posted at the doors of on-air studio sets), and then obtained an exclusive interview which appeared in *Nezavisimaya Gazeta* ("The Independent Gazette") on March 23.

Asked about the fate of Television News Service (TSN), the lively alternative to *Vremya*, and its anchor Tatyana Mitkova, fired for bucking the official line on Lithuania, Kravchenko described her behavior as "journalistic debauchery" and stated that the TSN problem reflected "the loss of basic discipline in the country, of respect for one's elders." Starostin then asks Kravchenko to comment on the astonishing statement by Yuri Luchinsky of the Russian parliament's committee on the media that Central TV's Channel 1 (especially heavy on pro-Gorby, anti-Yeltsin propaganda) might be blacked out in the Russian republic. "Yes," says Kravchenko. "This is technically possible, via satellite. So civil war in our country may well be preceded by space wars." Kravchenko also speaks of a "secret order" to block the signals of Soviet radio's Channel 1 using Russian civil defense systems, and put the pro-Yeltsin Radio Russia on its frequencies; the order, however, was countermanded. "It's a question of national security," laments Kravchenko. "One may only express regrets that we have come to this . . ."

In its following issue, *Nezavisimaya Gazeta* (which comes out three times a week) reported that the Moscow section of the Journalists' Union was set to expel "the executioner of glasnost" from its ranks at its March 27 meeting. When I called Starostin in Moscow on April 11 to inquire about Kravchenko's fate, he said that the broadcasting chief simply did not show up at the meeting; apparently, under the bylaws of the Journalists' Union, no member can be expelled in absentia. The most ironic aspect of this affair is that, according to Starostin, Kravchenko may have found out about the planned ambush from *Nezavisimaya Gazeta*. ("That," as Starostin put it, "is the downside of a free press for you.") *Kommersant*, however, quotes Journalists' Union chairman Eduard Sagalayev as saying that no one was going to expel Kravchenko, since he had not technically violated any rules; Kravchenko's colleagues were simply going to censure him for unethical behavior. More interestingly, the *Kommersant* article mentioned persistent rumors in media circles that Kravchenko may soon be promoted to a higher government job. It seems the All-Union Broadcasting Company is vetting candidates for the positions of TV channel directors, the litmus test being loyalty to Kravchenko's policies. ("Kravchenko May Go, TV May Stay," read the caustic headline over the *Kommersant* piece.) To protest these policies, many Soviet film producers, directors, and screenwriters are refusing to work for Central TV.

On the day he was supposed to be skewered by his colleagues, Kravchenko met instead with foreign diplomats stationed in Moscow. According to that night's *Vremya* broadcast, he told them that in these times of "harsh political struggle" the company he heads must, as a state company, "defend the position of the country's President." Added Kravchenko, "We have no censorship. We allow various political opinions, but we are categorically against frank opposition to Gorbachev."

Of Torn Boots and Fried Chicken

Kravchenko likes to assert that he's cutting down on all that political stuff because the public wants more entertainment on TV. Whether that is the foremost concern on Soviet people's minds is a little doubtful. The letters published in *Komsomolskaya Pravda* (March 21) are a litany of somewhat different woes. A 56-year-old teacher from Novorossiysk writes that he is forced to retire "because my torn boots have breathed their last. I can't get new ones, and to stand before my students in bedroom slippers is too embarrassing." A "group of mothers" from the Omsk region asks that soldiers being discharged after two years of compulsory service be issued non-regulation pants, which the mothers had not been able to buy for them. Tatiana from Sverdlovsk writes: "You know, never once in my life have I eaten my fill of oranges, not even of apples. Sometimes in my dreams, I see a fried chicken. A whole chicken, you understand? All mine, not just a wing, or a puny leg." The Ivanoyevsky family from Perm, with their last lightbulb burnt out and no new ones available in the stores, wants to know where one can get some spills—the matchwood pre-revolutionary peasants burned to light their cabins.

Gloria Steinem, Phone Home

Not surprisingly, most people in the Soviet Union now seem quite convinced of the superiority of Western and especially American ways—which doesn't mean they always know much about the latter. Last fall, teacher/writer Natalya Loginova asserted in *Literaturnaya Gazeta*, arguing for more sex education and birth control programs in Soviet schools, that such things were quite standard in the United States—*with no objections from parents or the public.* Now, in the March 23 *Komsomolskaya Pravda*, "sexologist" Sergei Agarkov sighs enviously that, in the blessed West, a woman is treated as "a decorative object, a pampered creature." Do these people get their notions of America from *Penthouse* or something?

The question of how women are treated in the West and in the Soviet Union brings me back for a moment to the "direct line" Yeltsin interview. At the end, asked what he would do if the doorbell rang one evening and Mr. and Mrs. Gorbachev stood in the doorway, Yeltsin replied, "First of all, I'd invite them in. Well, the women will go to the kitchen and talk about women's things. As for us . . ." I bet a lot of American politicians are secretly nostalgic for the time when they could say such things. □

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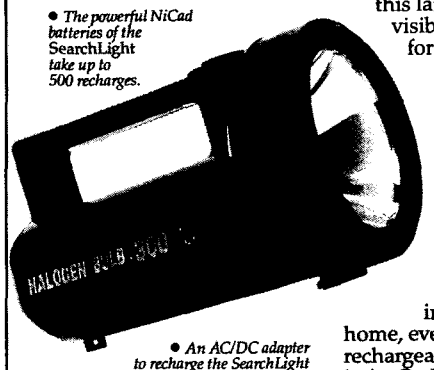

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AMONG THE INTELLECTUALOIDS

POP TARTS

by Steve Rabey

San Antonio

I rode up the escalator with someone who looked like he might be going my way. He had long, frizzy hair, wore jeans and sneakers, and carried a briefcase I suspected was full of earth-shattering academic research.

"Presenting a paper?" I asked.

"Yeah. I'm doing one on the 'Nancy' comic strip."

I didn't want to be so unkind as to laugh out loud, so I asked, "What did you find?"—expecting to hear that he'd discovered the modern equivalent of the Holy Grail by using the latest tools of critical analysis. But he surprised me.

"I didn't find anything much," he said with surprising earnestness. "But I do know a guy who has a unique approach to 'Nancy.' He plots the precise location of her head in the frame and he converts these locations into musical notation. From the songs that emerge he interprets the mood of Nancy's creator." Welcome to the 21st meeting of the Popular Culture Association (PCA), where thinkers gather each year to ponder "our everyday and dominant culture."

The man behind the March meeting in San Antonio is Ray B. Browne, founder of the PCA and chairman of the Department of Popular Culture at Bowling Green State University in Ohio. Browne takes his presenters—all 1,843 of them—very seriously, although he does distinguish between the relevant and the truly flaky. "Some of the subjects are more relevant than others." He adds, "Non-academics always—and often quite properly—make fun of academics. We academics are a national joke."

Yet Browne, who has had a running battle with higher education since his undergraduate years at the University of Alabama, usually describes academics not as "we" but as "they." His history of the PCA and the "popular culture movement" it helped create is called *Against Academia*. Here is his description of the conflict:

> This [movement] has been a kind of class-action suit against conventional points of view and fields of study in the Humanities . . . a confrontation between the Past and the Present, the Old and the New, the Sleepers and the Wakers, the Knowers and the Learners.

As a "Learner," I discovered that actress Jennifer Beals had had a "breast double," who stood in for the less-endowed star during key scenes in *Flashdance*; that the rock group Aerosmith never got to use its $16,000 special-effects device to produce rain for their video of "Janie's Got a Gun" (which is about a sexually abused daughter who murders her dad); that reincarnation has been scientifically proved. This last insight we owe to a woman attending a session on "Metaphysical and New Age Concepts," who said she had researched the impact of birth trauma on reincarnated souls "during a previous life."

Many of the seminars employed the word "imagery" in their titles, as in "Religious Imagery on MTV" and "Imagery and Ideology in Thermometer Art" (in which the presenter said—with no indication that any pun was intended—that thermometers were "a barometer of American tastes and values"). Sessions proliferated on the teaching of pacifism through the Vietnam war, along with dozens of papers on gay and lesbian studies, including one called "Bugs Bunny at 50: Still Cwoss-Dwessing and Cawwot-Cwazy."

Sessions focused on television (" 'The Oprah Winfrey Show' as Representative of the Death of Shame"), film ("Postmodern Meditations on *Who Framed Roger Rabbit*"), advertising ("Aunt Jemima: 100 Years an American Symbol"), popular music ("Get Your Biscuits in the Oven and Your Buns in the Bed: The Bakery Trade in Popular Song"), pop print ("*Seventeen* Magazine: Socializing Teenage Girls in the 'Right' Way to Be Beautiful and Fashionable"), sexuality ("How the Media Created the Bra-Burning Myth"), and others, including my personal favorite: "Generally Unknown and Often Misunderstood: An Introduction to People Who Fish Pay Lakes."

"If there's some weird, crazy thing you're interested in, you can find it here," says James Sayer, chairman of the communications department at Wright State University in Dayton, Ohio. Sayer, who has attended five PCA conferences, grew wistful as he thought back to last year's, which featured a paper on fish neckties, as well as a memorable incident. "I was eating breakfast," says Sayer, "thinking about the paper I was going to present, and trying to mind my own business. But I couldn't help overhearing the conversation at the table next to mine. One person leaned over to another and said, 'Oh, I just really want to let you know how much I appreciate your work on stop signs.' I nearly coughed up my oatmeal."

Not that you can draw a crowd for just any subject; some of the seminars are ludicrously small. One moderator opened her session with the comment, "Well, I guess there are more people in the audience than there are people presenting papers, so that means it's time to begin!"

At the session called "Animal Rights," a dour, angry man in black lashed out against the lackeys whose "meat-mania" fueled "the techno-medieval assembly lines of death." McDonald's ads targeted at youth, blue-collar workers, and the elderly were part of a sinister divide-and-conquer strategy to create new meat-eaters; an ad for lunch meat was said to portray "a bologna sandwich like a Eucharist—as if to eat bologna was to get a bite of the eternal truth."

"I suppose most of us already know all of this," he said. "That's why we're here."

Ray Browne is angry, too. He's angry at the intractable administrators who don't see the need for popular culture studies. He's angry at the National Endowment for the Humanities and the big foundations who don't give his PCA any money. And he's angry at most professors, who "are generally content to sit around laterally in the cold ashes of today and yesterday rather than to build new outpost fires down the line into tomorrow." He displays a near-monastic devotion to the cause, but he doesn't spend his free time watching "Twin Peaks" or MTV. "The world is too serious for entertainment," he says.

But Browne doesn't come across as angry. At 69, he's warm and winsome and even something of a square. He's not sure how long he's been married—he thinks it's twenty-three years—but he credits his wife with helping him keep his sanity: "Pat has been supportive and has carried at least 51 percent of the obligation. Together we have thumbed our noses at the world—and prospered." □

Steve Rabey is religion writer at the Colorado Springs Gazette Telegraph.

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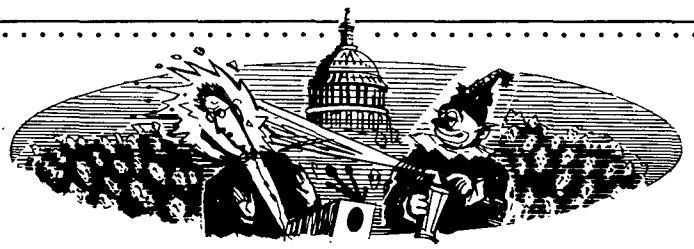


SCOUNDREL *TIMES*

by Ronald Radosh

On Sunday, March 31, the Arts and Leisure section of the *New York Times* ran a discussion of the new film, *Guilty by Suspicion*, by Victor Navasky, editor of the *Nation*. Navasky was upset that the hero of the film is depicted as blacklisted although he was completely innocent of Communist involvement; in reality, according to Navasky, the real victims of the HUAC hearings were American Communists and fellow travelers. By defying the House Un-American Activities Committee, Navasky implies, the Communists proved themselves courageous defenders of American democracy.

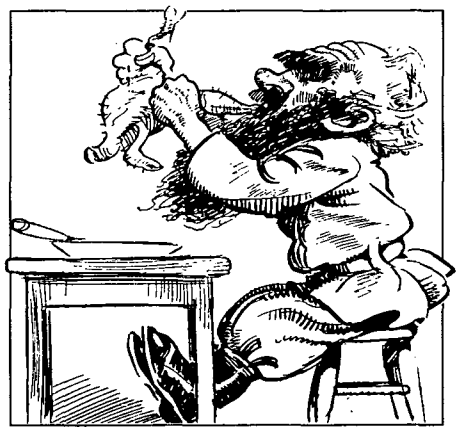
A few months before the film opened, I had offered to discuss it for the *Times*. The editors of the Arts and Leisure section commissioned the piece. The only stipulation, editor Lawrence Von Gelder told me by phone, was that if I were going to be critical of the film's politics, I would have to interview director Irwin Winkler and give him ample space to make his own case. No problem.

The article, handed in well in advance, was scheduled to run the Sunday after the film opened on March 15. But then I received a call from Marilyn Mindin, an Arts and Leisure editor, who told me that the section's chief editor, Connie Rosenblum, had decided it would be best to hold the article another two weeks, giving readers time to see the film and thus better appreciate a critical response to it. In the meantime, the film opened to favorable reviews, including a rave in the *New York Times*.

On the Monday before my article was supposed to appear, I spoke with Mindin. She confirmed that the piece was going to run as scheduled. But the next day, chief editor Rosenblum phoned to say they would not be using the piece. "We rarely pull a scheduled article at the last moment," she informed me. Acknowledging that I would be paid "a piddling check," Rosenblum said that they had planned to use it, but *New Jack City* was "hot," and they had to provide more space for it. Besides, interest in Winkler's film had dwindled, and they simply had no space for a discussion. It had been her idea to delay it for two weeks, Rosenblum added, for which she apologized. In parting, she expressed hope I would do something else for them in the future. She said not a word about their decision to run Navasky's piece in place of mine.

Unaware of this decision, however, I spoke with Mindin a few days later. I argued that the film was still important, that the *Times* had offered no critical analysis of it, and that my piece should be printed. She'd been out of town, she responded, and learned of the decision not to use my piece only after her return. She too said nothing about the Navasky decision.

I was shocked to see the Navasky piece when it ran in the March 31 *Times*. It turns out, as Navasky acknowledged to *The American Spectator*, that the *Times* editors had mentioned my pending piece to him. To add insult to injury, they allowed Navasky to link me with Pat Buchanan, an unabashed defender of McCarthyism, as part of the "right, which has its own reservations about the film." There is a name for such indiscriminate lumping as Navasky's—it is McCarthyism.



The next day I spoke again with Mindin. She denied that anyone had tried to hide news of the Navasky piece from me, and claimed that they had planned to run both articles, but that the need to give space to *New Jack City* had made that impossible. She did confirm, however, that the *Times* had asked Navasky to write about the topic only after receiving my article. Mindin called me after the editors received my letter critical of Navasky's piece. It ran on April 7 —cut, despite Mindin's promise that it would run in full.

In the original, I noted that, by linking me with Pat Buchanan, Navasky was guilty of his own form of McCarthyism. An editor called me to say that this was slander, and that they could not print it. I responded that, by implying I was a McCarthyite of the right, Navasky was demeaning my integrity, and in effect justifying the *Times*'s decision to spike my piece. Evidently he could slander me, but I was not allowed to respond. Nevertheless, I agreed to change the sentence to read: "Since I am neither on the right nor a defender of McCarthyism, Mr. Navasky seems to be guilty of engaging in his own guilt by association." Not even that was enough for the *Times*. The letter was printed without that sentence. And the editors still claim that the decision to kill my piece was not political. Herewith, the article that proved even hotter than *New Jack City*:

The blacklist era of the 1950s has fascinated our makers of culture for quite some time. By all accounts, it was one of the most traumatic events of our recent history. Since the 1970s, there have been scores of films which have used it as a backdrop, including *The Front*, *The Way We Were*, *Marathon Man*, *The House on Carroll Street*, and *Fellow Traveler*. But none has treated it so directly as the new movie *Guilty by Suspicion*, written and directed by one of Hollywood's top producers, Irwin Winkler. "It is the first time," Winkler says proudly, "that Hollywood has ever examined the role it played in what was a black time in America." Financed by Warner Brothers and filmed with the cooperation of 20th Century Fox, whose current directors were willing to acknowledge the sordid role their predecessors played a few decades back, Winkler clearly hopes to make a contribution towards both understanding this era and helping to prevent any reoccurrence.

Winkler has framed his film in a style familiar to viewers of docudramas. A fictional story is developed with main characters based on a composite of actual people—"fiction," Winkler puts it, "that blends a certain amount of reality to make the fiction more truthful to the audience." Yet, despite his disclaimer, the film, and the on-screen information at the beginning and conclusion, shows that Mr. Winkler has sought to both inform and convey what he believes is an accurate and essential depiction of the blacklist era, and to tell for the first time what it did to the community of creative artists in Hollywood.

The film tells the story of a fictional director, David Merrill, played brilliantly by Robert DeNiro. Working at Fox for Darryl F. Zanuck, Merrill is told by the studio chief that if he is to continue work on his current project, as well as another film Zanuck would like him to direct, he must agree to appear before the House Un-American Activities Committee (HUAC) and give the members what they want—the names of friends with whom he attended Communist meetings years earlier. Merrill, a man who lives for his craft, is forced to confront his own conscience. Viewing the degradation to which those of his friends who cooperate have fallen, Merrill realizes that he has but one choice if he is to maintain any integrity—that of refusing to cooperate with HUAC.

Zanuck sends Merrill to see counsel Allan Graff, played by the once blacklisted actor, Sam Wanamaker. He advises his clients to save their careers and to give HUAC what it wants—the names of old friends who once cooperated with Communists. If Merrill chooses to cite the 5th Amendment, which guarantees the right not to incriminate oneself, Graff points out that the message sent is that the witness is trying to hide something, and that to the Committee, the only thing one has to hide is Communist party membership. "You protect yourself against self-incrimination," he tells Merrill, "but you end up guilty by suspicion." At that point, the studio would cave in, and put him on a blacklist. Merrill, who we are told is a political innocent, is incredulous. He cannot believe he must become a friendly witness and purge himself, as he says, "just for going to a couple of meetings?"

The film follows the scenario of previous films on the blacklist. Such a scenario, Hilton Kramer wrote some sixteen years ago, contains "easily recognized villains, from Congressmen out to grab a headline at any cost to craven industry executives solely concerned to protect their careers and investments to former comrades out to save their own necks. The investigations and the hearings were often conducted in an appalling manner. Their very nature created a situation in which informing became a career in itself, and innocent people were

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Ronald Radosh is professor of history at the City University of New York, and co-author of The Rosenberg File: A Search for the Truth.

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smeared and even destroyed by the accusations."

Indeed, the film presents almost all those accused as completely innocent—as people who inadvertently, because "they were people caring about people," as one of the film characters puts it, found themselves going to a few meetings of groups which a decade later were declared to have been Communist fronts. Missing from the film are the actual Hollywood Communists, as well as the context in which the HUAC hearings were held—after the bitterly fought Hollywood wars of the 1930s and '40s, which pitted Communists and anti-Communist liberals in the film world against each other. Merrill is shown to have attended a few meetings in 1939 and 1940 because he wanted peace and was interested in "new ideas," and with his ex-wife, to have marched at a "ban the bomb" rally placed somewhere in the early fifties. His best friend Bunny Baxter, played by George Wendt, is shown to have had one minor slip. Going after an attractive girl, he let her take him to a Russian War Relief fund meeting in the middle of the war years. The Russians "were our allies," he tells Merrill, and now he is being forced to give names or lose his livelihood. The one actual Communist, director Joe Lesser—played by Martin Scorsese and patterned after Joseph Losey—is treated as a talented director whose views are his own affair; he too is meant to be seen as another innocent victim.

Mr. Winkler argues strongly that he decided to make the focus of his film a character "who was innocent, and who was attacked nevertheless." He argues that his film is about how the rights of all Americans, regardless of their political opinions, were trampled upon during the McCarthy era. Therefore, whether the accused were actually Communists is said to be irrelevant. "What is important," says Mr. Winkler, "is that an individual is accused and then blacklisted; his rights taken away without due process." Even if one was a Communist, Mr. Winkler says, it was a legal party, and people "were skewered for their political beliefs."

HUAC's hearings were clearly punitive—their 1951 investigations turned up nothing, and were meant to force recalcitrant witnesses to engage in a humiliating game of contrition by offering the Committee names it already had. Only the contrite could gain absolution, and the proof was to confess one's sins. But in reality, most of those brought before HUAC were ardent Stalinists or fellow travelers, whose own record of politics was hardly that of moral propriety. They were unfairly treated and punished, but they were not without their own degree of sin. Virtually all the Hollywood Communists, as Larry Ceplair and Steven Englund, the two authors of the definitive study of the blacklist era, *The Inquisition in Hollywood*, write, "defended the Stalinist regime, accepted the Comintern's policies and about-faces, and criticized enemies and allies alike with an infuriating self-righteousness, superiority, and selective memory which eventually alienated all but the staunchest fellow travellers."

They were hardly political innocents, acting like any American who participated in the political process. Indeed, the political infighting of the forties and fifties was often about the tenuous alliance of liberals with Communists. In the early thirties, the Communists had formed a broad anti-fascist coalition, which shared the support of liberals such as the actor Melvyn Douglas. It broke apart the moment the Nazi-Soviet Pact was signed in 1939. Hollywood Reds insisted that their liberal allies support neutrality. It was too much for Douglas. He introduced a resolution denouncing both "Nazi aggression" and "Soviet perfidy." The Communists refused to support it, and they allowed their coalition to fail rather than have it turn against Stalin. Douglas resigned in protest. It was episodes such as these that revealed to the liberal community the sordid face of Stalinism.

In the postwar period, Communist leaders insisted that every front group condemn the Marshall Plan. The Hollywood Communists, who had renewed their alliance with FDR liberals during the war, became completely intransigent once the Cold War was on. They placed all blame for U.S.-Soviet tensions on the Truman Administration. It was in this context that HUAC began its investigation of Hollywood in 1947. When the Hollywood Ten were first called, the large liberal-left community came to their defense. But the Ten's insistence upon hiding their own beliefs; their belligerence before HUAC, and their claim that their main goal was simply to defend the right of privacy isolated them from mainstream liberals, who were put off by the Ten's charges that they were fighting an America that was going fascist.

HUAC, for its part, was careful to focus its attention and its subpoenas on the small group of actual Communists and fellow-travelers, and to ignore the active and large liberal community. Moreover, by invoking the Fifth Amendment, they may have avoided jail, but they faced a greater political penalty. They could have chosen to assert their Communist affiliations, proclaim them proudly instead of insisting on their right to keep them private, and, after explaining the issues as they saw them, agree to face the consequences. But that was a policy the Communists never followed.

Lester Cole, a top Hollywood Communist and one of the Hollywood Ten, explained in his autobiography, *Hollywood Red*, that the affirmation of his party membership would harm his public role as an officer of the Screen Writers Guild. Cole admits that his own membership was "obvious," and that silence about membership in the party weakened his and the party's credibility. But he points out that the "cloak of secrecy surrounding party affiliation" was insisted on by the leadership, since "open identification would provide more ammunition for the enemy propaganda against us." In other words, if a Communist was called a Red, he was to meet the charge by a countercharge of Red-baiting, and to refuse to admit his true views. The scene in which the one avowed Communist, Joe Lesser, affirms his party membership, clearly does not ring true in its depiction of Communist behavior. The film also makes the McCarthy era actually more repressive than it was. In one memorable scene, a writer in the process of cooperating with HUAC is shown burning his books in a bonfire on his front lawn. The books he is destroying include those of James Joyce and the recently published novel *Catcher in the Rye*. When Merrill appears before HUAC at the film's end, he asks the Committee whether they know that the man who named him was burning books? A HUAC member replies sharply that there is too much "Communist filth" in our libraries, and perhaps they deserved to be burned.

The truth is that no such incident has ever been reported. Certainly, scared Communists may have got rid of or hid Marxist tracts and Communist literature—but *Catcher in the Rye*? Mr. Winkler admits that the scene "may be an exaggeration," although he claims to have heard such an incident did take place. "This is fiction," he says, and "I hope it blends a certain amount of reality to make the fiction more truthful to the audience." But the film, while fiction, uses a composite story to tell what is supposedly a truthful account of the blacklist years, and these little details seem as true as the ones depicted that actually did take place. Mr. Winkler uses real names—Darryl Zanuck, actor Howard DeSilva, and HUAC member Robert E. Stripling. Others are meant to suggest figures such as Roy Cohn, or actors such as Gary Cooper. The opening scene is taken verbatim from the famous testimony of actor Larry Parks, who pleaded that he not be forced to give names and crawl "through the mud." Other characters are clearly identifiable—the Broadway producer Abe Barron is obviously meant to depict Abe Burrows; Joe Lesser is based on director Joseph Losey. When a scene like the book-burning is shown, a filmgoer cannot but believe that such things actually happened.

Those victimized are, with the exception of the character played by Scorsese, all shown to have been political innocents, sucked in because they cared about people and issues. Merrill in particular says he sought out "new ideas" in 1939 and 1940, which is why he went to a few meetings. But in 1939 and 1940, the Communists were attacking those who still wanted to pursue an anti-fascist policy, and were calling the Roosevelt Administration warmongers. Is this what he was doing when he worked for peace? In 1951, HUAC is shown confronting him with evidence that he and his ex-wife appeared at a "ban the bomb" rally organized by a pro-Communist group. A modern audience watching this can only think how awful it is that someone who wants nuclear disarmament could be called a Red. But the only campaign the party supported against atomic weapons was the Stockholm Peace Petition, an innocuous call for nuclear disarmament that was started by the international Communist movement, and which carefully refrained from opposing testing of atomic weapons, since the Russians had a great amount of their own to carry out at that time.

Mr. Winkler captures the belligerent, bullying, and retrograde stance of HUAC, many of whose members failed to see any difference between loyalty and security, dissent and treason. While their investigations often violated America's democratic standards, that did not mean that true democrats had no reason to worry about Communism. There is little indication in the film that one could oppose both HUAC and the Communists. By making Communists an almost non-existent symbol for HUAC's unpardonable behavior, the film implies that HUAC's intended victims were genuine defenders of democracy—not Stalinists.

Moreover, the most famous judgment about the blacklist was that of Dalton Trumbo, the most celebrated member of the Hollywood Ten. In a speech accepting a Screen Writers Guild award in 1970, Trumbo magnanimously argued that "it will do no good to search for villains or heroes or saints or devils, because there were none; there were only victims . . . none of us—right, left, or center—emerged from that long nightmare without sin." Mr. Winkler, who considered using that statement as an epilogue, decided that while Trumbo could forgive, as a filmmaker, he could not. The result is the absence from *Guilty by Suspicion* of nuance or shading—and another picture of villainous devils pitted against unflawed heroes. Is it not time that Hollywood, which once gave us a comic opera portrayal of villainous Reds in long-forgotten anti-Communist films, not flip over to offering us films in which there are simply no Reds at all, or some who committed no moral wrongs? Is it not time for a more balanced and accurate picture of what really took place in the 1950s? Such a film waits to be made. □

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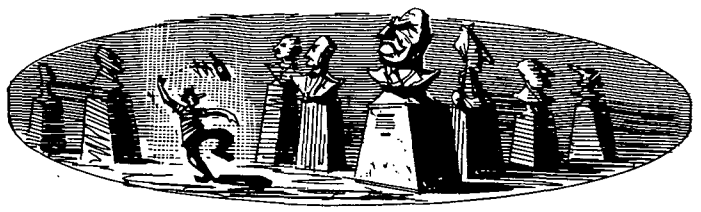

MASTER SHAWN

by Rick Marin

Wally Shawn is working the room. *The Fever*, a monologue by the well-known actor, playwright, and short-bald-guy-about-town, is about to begin at the tiny Second Stage on Manhattan's Upper West Side. Shawn is at the door, nodding hello to patrons who have paid $10 to see him perform. Then he starts pressing the flesh, especially the famous flesh of people he knows.

"You look great! You look healthy!" a harsh, expensive-looking woman in horn-rims shouts at this smiling, pallid gnome. She and Shawn embrace and graze each other's cheeks with society kisses. I'm deeply moved by this public display of affectation, as it allows me to spend more time eyeballing the woman's companion, who happens to be sitting across the aisle from me. Exquisite features. Cropped red hair. Long skirt of brown crushed velvet. Duck-hunting boots. (Hey, it's snowing!)

The harsh, expensive one drops actor Tom Conti's name, also that of "Rosanna" (Arquette, let's guess), and informs everyone within earshot that "Griffin" will be coming later. That would be Griffin Dunne—actor, producer, and (like Wally) son of a famous person. I suddenly grasp that I've been coveting Dunne's wife: Carey Lowell, the model-actress-Bond girl from *License to Kill*. This is the high point of the evening.

Rick Marin is television critic for the Washington Times.

What follows is an hour and a half of whining liberal guilt and elitist moralizing from a privileged Manhattanite who's just noticed the silver spoon protruding from his mouth—and is embarrassed by it. Son of William Shawn, for decades editor and spiritual guru of the *New Yorker*, Wallace "Wally" Shawn has written several plays[1] and acted in several movies, going back to his bit in *Annie Hall*, as Diane Keaton's ex, the one Woody Allen calls a "homunculus." He is, in short, famous—and famous for being short. Cherubic, irrepressibly enthusiastic: he's funny at being funny-looking. Except when he's taking himself seriously. "An orgy of self-flagellation," Frank Rich wrote in the *New York Times* of *The Fever*'s opening last December. How right he was. But when Wally Shawn flagellates himself, it's the audience that suffers.

What is *The Fever* about? Basically, Wally Shawn sits on a chair and recounts the pleasant life and violent fantasies of a character very like himself. What *he* would say it's about is the fact that anyone who eats a nice dinner at Le Cirque or buys gourmet groceries at Balducci's is a "murderer," because there are starving peasants and Marxist revolutionaries in poor Latin American countries who are being "tortured" and "murdered" by U.S.-backed regimes. "I, Wally, am a murderer" is the gist of the argument, and so, by extension, are all of you who lead lives similar to, if not quite so glamorous as, mine. A Shawn syllogism: "If food is produced for the hungry children, then certain operas will not be performed." Maybe even certain monologues on the Upper West Side.

[1]His previous play, you'll remember, was the acclaimed *Aunt Dan and Lemon*—about how Henry Kissinger was a Nazi and the root of all evil.

Perhaps out of consideration for the less fortunate, Shawn had not originally intended to perform *The Fever* for money. For months he simply took it around to people's living rooms for the benefit of small groups of friends and admirers. The image of Wally Shawn enacting his solipsistic manifesto for a salon of New York socialites and "intellectuals" sounds like a scene out of Molière. And, to his credit, he seems to have turned his court-jester routine into what less sensitive males might call a chick-magnet. A friend of mine who lives near Shawn once spotted a long, luscious blonde waiting at a neighborhood corner. There she was—arms crossed, coolly clicking one heel on the pavement. Then, just as my friend was planning a line of attack, there was Wally Shawn! He and the woman embraced and they walked off together, his arm around the waist of this Venus at least a head taller than him. Impressive.

But to get back to *The Fever* and the big moral-political issues that the rest of us are too bourgeois or craven to notice.[2] Shawn's narrator has a dream: It is Christmas. He has a wife and children (which Shawn does not). In the dream he wakes up in bed "frightened and sweating," then goes into the bathroom to brush his teeth. His water glass falls on the floor, shattering. He slips, cuts himself on the shards of glass and "blood fills the floor." The family comes to his aid and he cries, sobbing at them: " 'I'm sorry,' I said, 'I cannot give you any more presents. I love you all but I don't want to give you any more presents.' "

[2]Farrar, Straus & Giroux has published the text of *The Fever* in 67 wide-margined, large-type pages at a mere $20 per hardcover and $8.95 paper. How many children, Shawn must have wondered, will go hungry at those prices?

Shawn lets us know that he has been given very nice, wonderful presents all his life. By adoring parents, adoring friends. He describes a scene at a "fancy restaurant" where "women in bright red lipstick" and "men in beautiful shirts" shower him with "outrageous, unexpected, and funny gifts." He thinks about these things, his wonderful life and . . . he vomits. Again and again. The conceit of the piece is that this narrator is in a hotel room in a poor, evidently Latin American country. Bad things are happening there. Brutal torture. Execution. Kafkaesque water bugs in the hotel bathroom. He himself is beaten, and he vomits a great deal. Not just ordinary vomit, mind you, but real, existential, Sartrean *nausée*. Designer vomit, if you will.

Another Shawn epigram: "The life I lead is irredeemably corrupt. It has almost no justification." I'm inclined to agree. Let's review the bio. Born, New York City, 1943. Attended the Dalton and Putney Schools. Harvard. Oxford. In the 1960s, taught English, Latin, and Drama in India and Manhattan. In 1974, his first play, *Our Late Night*, is performed. It is directed by André Gregory—later co-author and co-star with Shawn in the most pretentious movie of all time, *My Dinner with André*. Various movie roles: Woody's *Manhattan* and *Radio Days*, a cunning prosecutor in *The Bedroom Window*, and, yes, an actual gnome in *The Princess Bride*.

"I happen to be on the list of short, bald character actors," Shawn told *Interview* magazine. And: "I am a ludicrous person. I consider myself an idiot." Self-deprecation is his big thing. He told the *Village Voice*: "I'm very pretentious. I accepted that a long time ago." But he always makes sure we understand how profoundly *justified* his pretentiousness is: "I rather boringly try to think through the details of my life as if it mattered." Read: the unexamined life is not worth living.

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Some might say the Shawn-examined life is not worth listening to. He tells of visiting a "revolutionary country," probably Nicaragua. There are many soldiers but they look like "shepherds in Renaissance paintings." Their green uniforms look like "pajamas." How charming! He stays at an "eccentric, expensive" hotel where he is served delicious ice cream. Then he travels to a neighboring poor country that sounds a lot like El Salvador. There the soldiers wear "strange expressions." The ice cream there, he says, is not good. This country is not charming.

Has Wally Shawn appointed himself the Leonard Bernstein of the 1990s? Not even. In the 1960s Bernstein threw a party for the Black Panthers and at least met them. In the 1990s Shawn prefers to *imagine* what it would be like to have dinner at a poor person's house: the "sticky smell," TV always on, tasteless decor, greasy meat, children "sneezing and coughing." Whose house is this, Bob Cratchit's?

Shawn's condescension towards the "poor," a category encompassing everyone who doesn't attend the theater regularly and can't afford to shop at Balducci's, is matched only by his intense fear of becoming one of them. He thinks about giving beggars and bums not just some but *all* of his money. He doesn't do it because that would make him, well, poor. Hence the Guilt, as he pleads towards the end of *The Fever*, "Forgive me. Forgive me. I know you forgive me."

The people gathered here tonight will forgive him. They're his *friends*. Afterwards he can go out on the town with Griffin Dunne, Carey Lowell, and that other woman who kissed him before the show. Outside the theater he can give money to a person living in a cardboard box. Then all of them (except the man in the cardboard box) can take a cab to a "fancy restaurant." Maybe they'll even give him a little present! □

THE TALKIES

LOOKING FOR A GOOD TIME?

by James Bowman

Why can't anyone make a halfway decent erotic movie anymore? An all-the-way decent one would, I suppose, be a contradiction in terms. And quite indecent ones—i.e., straightforward pornography—are similarly self-subversive: their grossness overwhelms their capacity for titillation. But the erotic art-house picture of yesteryear, in which the characters were at least close to believable and sex scenes excited the imagination without an excess of gynecological detail to kill it, seems to have gone the way of ballroom dancing. That there is still an audience for someone who can get the balance right appears from the interest that has been aroused, at least initially, in a string of recent films.

First there was Peter Greenaway's *The Cook, the Thief, His Wife and Her Lover*, whose title promised a soap opera–like complexity of relationships but which was, in fact, just an excuse for a tract on how power pathology and sex pathology feed into one another. Greenaway anticipated the achievement of Bret Easton Ellis in making the most appalling sorts of behavior boring. What a waste of Michael Gambon and Helen Mirren! The erotic scenes were so bizarrely contrived for symbolic purposes that they repelled rather than invited imaginative self-identification of audience with characters. *Henry and June* at least had no ideological axe to grind and tried to make use of period detail (1930s Paris) to recapture the excitement of novelty in a series of sexual adventures that look pretty tame by the standards of more recent art. But old cars, hats, and stockings that tie with ribbons were not enough to make these people seem innocent again. Then, earlier this year, *The Sheltering Sky*, by Bertolucci, tried a different sort of exoticism and decadence by whisking Debra Winger and John Malkovich off to North Africa where, after Malkovich expired horribly from typhus (or was it cholera?), Miss Winger's sexual awakening in the arms of a swarthy and polygamous camel driver was too conveniently primitivist to be remotely believable. In reality, she would have been too busy killing lice to have enjoyed anything more sensual than a hot bath.

All of these films, which I went to see in previews or on opening day, were packed with eager, mostly middle-aged people, many of them in couples, looking to refire their jaded imaginations with fresh images of the magic of sexual discovery. That these films did not fare especially well at the box office suggests that a lot of people shared my disappointment in them. Yet the moviemakers keep trying. The latest appeal to the cloyed carnality of an audience in whose company I am so often surprised to find myself was Paul Schrader's *Comfort of Strangers*, with a screenplay by Harold Pinter based on a novel by Ian McEwan. It is set in Venice and all the clothes are by Giorgio Armani, so it is plausibly billed as an erotic adventure.

This is a misrepresentation. Here is no yuppie pepper-upper, though it is made to look like one by recombining elements of the recent representatives of the genre—the decadence of *Henry and June*, the exoticism of *Sheltering Sky*, and the artistic pretension of *Cook, Thief, Wife, Lover*. Certainly, I expected a sensual stimulant when I found the second bargain matinee sold out and had to squeeze into the early evening show. Once again, I was disappointed. Natasha Richardson wasn't pretty enough, Rupert Everett was too pretty, the photography, costumes, and sets were too slick and self-indulgent, and the Pinterian dialogue appealed, as always, to the audience's sense of abstraction rather than empathy—something which is, of course, as fatal to your artistic aphrodisiac as it is to any other kind. Watching this on the blue-movie channel in your hotel room would be like turning on the gondola races.

It is a more intelligent film than *Cook, Thief* etc., which deals with very

James Bowman, TAS*'s movie critic, is American editor of the* Times Literary Supplement.

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much the same subject: the relationship between patriarchy and sexuality. Do you suppose these high-brow types will *ever* get over their obsession with feminism? I guess they must feel like the boy in Erica Jong's *Fear of Flying* who said that he was handing out feminist tracts because it was "a good way to get laid," but it makes it awfully hard on the rest of us who have more of an appetite for art than for ideology. Here patriarchy is represented by Christopher Walken, who responds to everything that he sees about him in Venice with an anecdote about his dead father—a big, strong man with a black mustache that he used to touch up with mascara.

Walken has an exaggerated respect for patriarchy, without the strength to carry it on in an uncongenial age. He is a latent homosexual who, naturally, goes in for gay-bashing. He and his wife (Helen Mirren again, this time with all her clothes on) are childless, but he has permanently crippled her by the violence of his lovemaking. Together they are a metaphor for patriarchy gone rotten and perverse; yet the effete English couple (Richardson and Everett) find their love life mysteriously revitalized by contact with them. The film ends with a gratuitous murder, suggesting fashionable despair at the prospect of what we used to think of as normal erotic relationships. Sexual roles have become too confused, and the mirror symbolism of the ending as well as the fashion-plate photography throughout evoke instead mere reflexivity of passion. Here is narcissism grown sick of itself and blaming normal sex.

Sex-role confusion is also the theme of Luc Besson's *La Femme Nikita*, a French version of recent American super-cop movies. Having gone on remaking American *films noirs* of the 1940s (which they first identified and named) for forty years, the French are now ready to start knocking off another American model, it seems: *Robocop* meets *Moulin Rouge*. Here the cop is not a super-machine but a super-woman—built more on the lines of Audrey Hepburn than of Linda Carter. The preposterousness of casting the exquisite *gamine*, Anne Parillaud, as a vicious cop-killer reprogrammed to be a deadly efficient secret agent is oddly made more tolerable by the compounded preposterousness of having instruction in femininity alternate with instruction in martial arts.

It is the glorious Jeanne Moreau who undertakes the former. Like Truffaut thirty years ago, Besson recognizes the sense of danger that always attaches to Mlle. Moreau's attractiveness, even in age, and he tries to tease this out by having her say to the certifiable man-killer: "Remember that two things have no limit: femininity and the means of taking advantage of it." Yet we are never shown that her pupil can wield female sexuality with the handiness that she does the enormous, phallic weapons she is constantly being given—in order that she may blow away the enemies of *l'état*. On the contrary, she falls into a soppy relationship with a nice supermarket checkout boy (Jean-Hugues Anglade) as a way of getting over a crush on her tough mentor in the secret service (Tcheky Karyo). This is disappointing, but it does give Besson a chance to highlight in a couple of touching vignettes the painful split between ruthless efficiency and a more vulnerable and un-Moreauvian femininity—a split that even a lot of non-gun-toting gals know something about.

Here is the new *femme*—even more alarmingly *fatale* for the nineties. Those of us with a certain nostalgia for the old one approached Jerry Rees's film of Neil Simon's screenplay for *The Marrying Man* with high hopes for the performance of the sultry Kim Basinger, who looks almost as dangerous, if not quite so subtle, as Jeanne Moreau. That is what she is supposed to be, anyway. As a Las Vegas club singer and the mistress of Bugsy Siegel (Armande Assante), she exerts an irresistible attraction over a rich playboy (Alec Baldwin) who is about to be married but who plunges into a quick affair with her in spite of the danger. "Some things are worth risking your life for," he says, and a lot of other poor male saps will know what he means.

But this movie has serious problems—and problems with seriousness. It is an illustration of what happens when you try to put the engine of light comedy into a body of heavy thought: you get an underpowered film. The plot is pure farce. When Bugsy catches Baldwin and Miss Basinger together, he decides to amuse himself by forcing them to marry instead of killing them. After a quick annulment and Baldwin's apparent reconciliation with fiancée number one, the two meet again and marry again, this time driven only by internal compulsions. Baldwin has to go back to Boston to look after his father's toothpaste business. Basinger doesn't like Boston and leaves him. After they divorce, Baldwin meets and marries her again. But when he loses all his money the strain is too much and they part again until . . . Let's see, is that three times or four? Anyway, they marry each other four times.

Funny idea. But that kind of funny idea needs simple characters, fast pacing, sharp timing, and a framework of meaning that is as light as a go-kart. Instead, Simon puts his go-kart engine into a 1950s-vintage, cast-iron sedan that it just can't pull. After the manner of his late work, he offers us characterization and depth and meaning and philosophical reflection on the nature of love and sexual attraction for all the world as if he were a more jolly version of Harold Pinter. Phooey! I have nothing against philosophical mass and gravity, but in a work of art you've got to have something (usually a story) to keep all that weight on the move, and this story, with its multiple coincidences and farcical business, is not powerful enough to do that. Either the farce or the philosophy might have worked separately, but together they produce only slow-paced comedy caught up less in meaningfulness than in pretentiousness. Simon shoulda stuck to comedy, as one of Alec Baldwin's hangers-on would say.

If you are ready to give up on the fatal woman, you might want to give a try to woman (and man) as fatality. Albert Brooks's *Defending Your Life* offers a new and welcome variation on the lately popular Hollywood theme of ghost-lusting. Here, instead of having the recently deceased come back from the grave for a bit of ectoplasmic intercourse with the bereaved, *both* the lovers (Brooks himself and Meryl Streep) are dead people. This is more satisfying. Those mixed marriages never work. The two meet and fall in love in Judgment City, which is meant to look like Southern California without smog or stress, crime or cholesterol—right down to the screening rooms in which people have to review their lives and submit to judgment.

Also in keeping with the Californian ambiance, it is a very non-judgmental judgment—more like quality control, really. Brooks's defender (Rip Torn) tells him that the universe is like a machine and will break down if it has faulty parts. If you are a faulty part you must be reincarnated on earth and try again to get it right; once you do, you go on to some unspecified but no doubt very important career as a widget in the great machine. This is no more impressive as theology than Hollywood sentimentalism generally is, but it has much more than the usual dramatic potential because the judgment of Judgment City is based on confronting again the worst fears of your life.

Brigid Brophy once said that "Courage is the only virtue," and Brooks's afterlife seems to be based upon the same premise. In fact, courage is not a virtue at all, but the precondition of all virtue (and a lot of vice too, as Alec Baldwin discovers). In dramatic/cinematic terms, however, it is a virtue to concentrate on the starkly emotional issue of facing up to one's fears. In the first of Brooks's film clips from his past, for example, he must relive the 11-year-old's terror of a playground bully and—much worse—shame of having backed down from a fight with him. Which of us cannot understand these powerful and elemental feelings?

Yet Brooks, with the help of Torn's lawyerly evasions, is as unwilling to face them in the afterlife as he was in this. And, in several of the vignettes from the past that he is forced to re-experience, it is hard to see what fear has to do with them at all: his mistakes, awkwardnesses, pratfalls may garner a few easy laughs, but he leaves untouched whole fields of emotional energy. The love story, too, is superficial and unengaging in itself and only provides an opportunity for belated bravery. Even the comic setups like the "Past Lives Pavilion," where the hostess is Shirley MacLaine, the Judgment City nightclub where the comic's act is deader than the dead audience, and the running joke about brain capacity are not exploited to the full. Brooks has some funny ideas and some funny lines, but his film does not please as an artistic whole. It does not generate enough dramatic force to overcome our naive belief, with Andrew Marvell, that "The grave's a fine and private place/But none, I think, do there embrace."

For the nearest thing to genuine erotic experience currently to be found on the silver screen we have to look to—of all places—China. Zhang Yimou's *Ju Dou* combines breathtaking photography (what an inspired idea to set this romance in a silk-dyeing factory) with an immediately engaging, down-to-The Good-Earth love story that excites the imagination without either Armani clothes or anyone's taking them off. Here, too, sex is dangerous but in the way it is for most of us—i.e., without sharp knives or high-caliber firearms. Danger lies instead, as it does in almost all of the greatest love stories, in the conflict between private passion and public responsibility. Patriarchy is as sinister here as it is in *The Comfort of Strangers*, but the film's approach to it is non-ideological (could it be that Chinese artists, unlike our own, have had quite enough of that kind of thing?) and therefore tragic rather than nihilistic.

Here the social limitations upon individual feeling are taken for granted in a way that perhaps they never can be again in Western art. That's why we need the contrived limitations of individual psychoses or the arcane world of spies and assassins in order to reconstruct for ourselves an alternative to the mere banality of "relationships." The village mores and customs of *Ju Dou* are simply given, and they provide a corresponding set of artistic limitations that produce a lot more emotional bang for your buck than anything I've seen for a long time. It's strong stuff, as the pornographers would say. □

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BOOK REVIEWS

GUERRILLA PRINCE: THE UNTOLD STORY OF FIDEL CASTRO
Georgie Anne Geyer/Little, Brown/407 pp. $22.95

FIDEL: EL JUICIO DE LA HISTORIA
Roberto Luque Escalona/Editorial Dante (Yucatan, Mexico)/185 pp. (no price given)

CUBA: A JOURNEY
Jacobo Timerman/Alfred A. Knopf/125 pp. $18.95

Irving Louis Horowitz

With the 1989 overthrow of totalitarian states in Eastern Europe and elsewhere, even those Stalinist regimes that survived have undergone substantial changes: Albania has just held its first elections ever, North Korea is dropping hints at reintegration with the South, and Cambodia and Vietnam are showing signs of political—or at least diplomatic—liberalization. Yet, thirty-two years after Fidel Castro and his 26th of July Movement triumphed over the thoroughly corrupt dictatorship of Fulgencio Batista, Castro remains in absolute power, more adamant than ever that he will not modify his direction. In politics, longevity is nearly as fascinating a topic as legitimacy, and, as tyrants will, Castro repeatedly lays claim to the latter by means of the former.

Fanatics make good biography, and Georgie Anne Geyer's *Guerrilla Prince* is one of the most important contributions to an understanding of Cuban Communism that has appeared in recent years. The book is a Hollywood-style *chronique scandaleuse*: behind the sociological rhetoric of the "charismatic figure" is a psychological portrait of a man who plainly does not want to be examined in his role of father, lover, or lout. It is *unauthorized* biography. It has not been stage-managed by Fidel and does not rest on late-night "interviews" patently intended to disinform—like those which led to Tad Szulc's uncritical *Fidel: A Critical Portrait*.

Great dictators desire to control not only present but also future interpretations of their roles. Authorized biographies of Stalin reached the point at which *no one* could be trusted to write them; biography became autobiography. Similarly, Fidel in his endless interviews provides a self-portrait that has effectively made him his only biographer. (Barbara Walters's interviews, for example, succeeded more in giving Fidel a forum than in giving the viewer knowledge.) Geyer's decision to write an unauthorized biography was clearly a difficult one; as a journalist she doubtless would have preferred interviewing to surrounding Fidel with associates' anecdotes. But I think she made the wise decision, one that adds immeasurably to the authority of her work. By subjecting Castro to a scrutiny of his bad marriage, illegitimate children, and failed romances, Geyer cuts through the myth to the man. And if at times she is one-sided, she at least succeeds in redressing the deadly-dull exercise of taking Fidel at face value as the Bolívar of our time.

Guerrilla Prince is cleverly divided into three parts: "Fidel," "Castro," and "El." Geyer explains the taxonomy on the very last page of the book:

> In the beginning, the Cuban people had called him "Fidel" in adoration, in salvation, in love, like a Spanish woman with her husband before marriage. After the magnificence of the *Triunfo*, they immediately began calling him "Castro," in sobriety, in respect, in fear. In the end, they called him only "El," or "He." For he had become finally not one of them but a differentiated creature away from them—that sun so hot that it burned to come close.

The first section will undoubtedly carry the freight for the sophisticated reader, for it explores aspects of the pre-1959 period that the ruler has largely kept hidden. The vignettes—Fidel on his honeymoon in New York buying a Lincoln Continental, witnessing the *Bogotazo* that followed the assassination of Jorge Eliécer Gaitán in Bogota in 1948, walking about Havana with his copy of *Mein Kampf*—give a rich portrait of the young man as a budding old dictator.

The book benefits from typically sharp woman's instinct. Through it all, as Fidel lived on the edge of danger, women paraded through his life (as they still do), providing him with a sense of importance and validating his masculinity. I am not sure that a male author could so successfully have tied in Fidel's sexual adventures and misadventures with his disregard for marital vows and parental responsibilities. The tone in such passages is engagingly disapproving, but if Fidel had in fact been some sort of strait-laced Puritan, would the outcome have been any different?

Still, we learn the extent to which totalitarianism presupposes a personality cult. We get a portrait of Castro as part of a network of twentieth-century cult figures who have far more in common personally than ideologically. The great chain of dictatorial beings—from Lenin and Stalin through Hitler and Mussolini—provides an unambiguous governing force in Castro's life. Most tellingly, Geyer notes the mutual admiration between Castro and Franco. Franco greatly admired Castro's anti-Americanism, and Castro in turn declared a national week of mourning after the generalissimo's death. One wonders what members of the Abraham Lincoln brigade who fought against Franco, and the younger generations who formed the backbone of Castro's Venceremos Brigade, will think upon learning that their personal hero was cut from such neo-fascist cloth. For Castro is a dictator with the staying power of a Franco and the vision of a Torquemada. Geyer has made it crystal-clear that it is the legacy of Spain, not the "ideology" of Russia, that best explains his soul and substance.

The problem with Castro is better revealed in Robert Dahl's phrase "After the Revolution, What?" than in Max Weber's oft-repeated but little-understood notion of charisma. Geyer forgets that many of the people she interviewed were part of the 1959 revolution. Their breaks with the regime had to do with public issues, like economics and foreign policy, not private ones, like philandering and fornicating. Give absolute power to a saint and you have the Inquisition; give absolute power to a sinner and you have the Committee for the Defense of the Revolution.

Roberto Luque Escalona, who describes himself as "a man, and only a man," and bolsters his macho credentials by dedicating his book to Jersey Joe Walcott, takes a more personal angle on Fidel. For Luque went to Mexico in 1958, where he was part of the crucial support base for the 26th of July Movement. After returning to Havana in 1961, he worked for the regime until breaking with Castro over the leader's unquestioning support for the Soviet invasion of Czechoslovakia. Unlike other dissenters, however, he still lives in Cuba.

In his remarkable essay *Fidel: El juicio de la historia* ("The Judgment of History"), Luque, like Geyer, emphasizes Castro's roots in the Spanish province of Galicia—whose people are violent, ruthless, uncompromising. But Luque also sees Fidel as a Robin Hood, a Captain Ahab (to the United States' Moby Dick), even as a "perverse Nor-

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Irving Louis Horowitz is Hannah Arendt Distinguished Professor of Sociology and Political Science at Rutgers University. His anthology on Cuban Communism *is now in its seventh edition, while his memoir,* Daydreams and Nightmares, *was recently awarded the 1991 National Jewish Book Award in autobiography.*

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man baron." Why look to literature rather than to politics to explain him? Because the shrinking of Cuba's power base to Fidel's immediate family gives him a dynastic role that is near-archaic, and would be more easily understood by students of Elizabethan tragedy than by State Department policy-makers.

Luque's history of the Machado and Batista dictatorships and the pre-rule years of Fidel and Che covers familiar territory, but in a lively way. He sees Fidel's successes during the Eisenhower and Kennedy years as due to both American naiveté and Castro's keen perception that the United States's power at the time was subtly limited by its preoccupation with domestic problems.

Jacobo Timerman's extended essay on Cuba is best viewed as a sightseeing footnote to Geyer's work. Despite Timerman's polemical animus towards "United States aggression," the book does offer glimpses into Castro's Cuba. Timerman's elevation of himself to the role of counterweight to the "rightist views" of Armando Valladares (an unpardonable slander against the man who exposed Cuba's prison system) is sheer conceit. For those who—whatever the reason—can only hear or trust such a voice, this can be a useful book.

One must wade through piles of Timerman's rhetoric: his lifelong identification with revolution, his clashes with American anti-Castro forces, his debates with the Cuban organizers of the trip. Finally (on page 45) we get to the core of his concerns:

> Cuba's problem goes deeper than the deterioration of world economic conditions or the fact that Cuba is in the Caribbean and not on the Black Sea. The problem continues to be the limitations imposed by the impenetrable glass dome on Cubans' lives, their energies, their innermost human nature.

But instead of following this sensitive appreciation with some tough analysis, Timerman veers off into a study of cultural and literary clashes. It is Gabriel García Márquez and Ernest Hemingway who seem to attract most of his energies. The colossal ego of this minor political actor (Timerman) is so overwhelming that the analysis of the colossal ego of a major political figure (Castro) is lost. Timerman even envisions Castro being wounded by his not having set up an interview.

Timerman downplays Cuba's economic failures, reserving his polemics for "CIA marionettes." He admits that "no one believes it is possible for Cuba, via the armed forces and its security organs, to be a distributor of Colombian drugs without the Castro brothers' participation in the operation." But this counts for little compared to "the scant credibility of the United States government in its accusations against Cuba—often verging, no doubt, on paranoia or on state terrorism tactics." His "evidence" comes from a 1988 report by the Aspen Institute for Humanistic Studies—hardly a haven for moderates.

This sort of "even-handedness," in which dictators and democrats are seen as equivalent while left-socialists like Timerman parade their virtues, ends in a quagmire. What Timerman likes to call the "Jewish element" in journalism—irony and skepticism—is here merely ambiguity and confusion. Stripped of his moralistic fervor, Timerman is revealed as simply a man at loose ends. Castro does that to critics: he makes the world of socialism uninhabitable for Westerners, but also manages to convince them that there is no way out of it. □

REAGAN AND THATCHER

Geoffrey Smith/W. W. Norton/285 pp. $22.95

Andrew Roberts

Advice such as "Remember, George, this is no time to go wobbly" not only gives an insight into how intimate Margaret Thatcher and George Bush became during the Gulf Phony War, but also confirms our perception of the former premier as congenitally *un*wobbly. How often did she have to give the same advice to Bush's predecessor? This impressive new book gives us several clues.

Geoffrey Smith, a veteran *Times* of London journalist and longtime Washington habitué, has written a fascinating and highly readable account of the most genuinely close partnership in the history of the Special Relationship: his two protagonists meet, win the respect of one another, and finally effect the geopolitical equivalent of falling in love. Smith is historian enough not to attempt to depict the Reagan-Thatcher affair as unique. He gives a superb overview of the role personal friendships have played since 1941 in Anglo-American relations. Ever since the Grand Alliance of FDR and Churchill, image-builders on both sides of the Atlantic have tried to portray each President and Prime Minister as personal friends.

Sometimes the attempt reflected genuine chumminess, as in that between Macmillan and Eisenhower, forged in the shared experiences of the War in the Mediterranean. Sometimes it was one-sided: Harold Wilson perceived Lyndon Johnson's wary disdain as genuine esteem. At other times the propagandists relied on a spurious avuncularity, as in Macmillan's dealings with Kennedy. (It was Macmillan who made the supremely patronizing remark about Britain becoming Greece to America's Rome.) Only the reflexively anti-American Edward Heath bucked the trend, finding himself unable to get along on any sort of personal terms with Richard Nixon.

The harsh logic of national interest has always underlain these public-relations games. Churchill professed to worship Roosevelt, "this thrice-chosen leader of the greatest democracy on earth," because the survival of his country depended on it. Equally, Heath felt he could snub Nixon because he saw Britain's destiny elsewhere, and possibly even perceived advantages in downplaying British Atlanticism to his European audience. By 1979, Margaret Thatcher had realized that if her country was to matter a jot on the world stage, she would have to get on well with whoever was President of the United States.

This proved difficult at first: Jimmy Carter was far closer to Labour Prime Minister James Callaghan (whose vacillation in the face of England's "winter of discontent" in 1978 mirrored Carter's own vacillation at America's economic "malaise") than he was to Mrs. Thatcher. She was undoubtedly relieved when a believer in self-reliance, economic discipline, cultural traditions, and pugnacious nationalism was elected in 1980. The author is probably correct when he perceives Mrs. Thatcher's instinctive pro-Americanism as lying deep in her youth. The Second World War molded her generation, and in the Cold War Anglo-American cooperation proved of paramount importance. Mrs. Thatcher's ideology explains the respect she expressed for Reagan's gubernatorial achievements in California when they met in 1975 and again in 1978. Far more than any personal chemistry (let alone the sexual *frisson* some commentators have tried to spot), it was this political soundness that attracted her to him.

For, although Reagan exudes an old-world gallantry towards women, which Mrs. Thatcher likes and which sends feminists berserk, their personalities are very different. Where Reagan is anecdotal, easygoing, and genuinely humorous, Mrs. Thatcher is analytical, polemical, and would not recognize a joke if it were to walk up to her and hand her a red box. The author is surely right in saying that had Reagan, with his poor grasp of details, been a British politician, Mrs. Thatcher would have had very little time for him.

The relationship developed so felicitously precisely because distance lent enchantment to the already slightly idealized view each had of the other. The sheer length of time they had in power together—she was Prime Minister throughout his years in the White House—allowed favors to be granted and called back again over time. Mrs. Thatcher's decision to allow American bombers to attack Tripoli from British soil was a clear *quid pro quo* for the help certain Anglophiles in the Pentagon—such as Caspar Weinberger and John Lehman—had afforded the British during the Falklands War. Similarly, the Reagan cabinet was left in no doubt as to the extent to which Margaret Thatcher's blind-eye-turning and linguistic sophistry helped them weather the Iran-contra storm.

In fact, the most interesting chapters of Smith's book are those dealing with Iran-contra. Mrs. Thatcher had fairly detailed knowledge of what Poindexter, North, and the others were up to some twelve months in advance. It is now known that MI5, Britain's equivalent of the CIA, bugged the hotel room in which Robert McFarlane and Oliver North met the Iranian arms dealer Ghorbanifar in December 1985. Into Mr. Smith's normally forthright narrative creep the weasel-words "probably," "perhaps," and "apparently." But, just before the entire account begins to sound like the ramblings of some gossipy old spook, the reader is brought up sharply by a fact. On February 29, 1986, two top British foreign policy officials, Sir Antony Acland and Sir Percy Cradock, met Admiral Poindexter in Washington and discussed the arms-for-hostages deal.

We are reminded how easy it has been for terrorists to influence the foreign policy of the world's number-one superpower simply by kidnapping her citizens. What an appalling tactical error Saddam Hussein made when he released his "guests" last Christmas. We also see how Mrs. Thatcher, like a virgin at a toga party, actually stuck to her principles while all about her were divesting themselves of theirs as quickly as possible. She actually believed in

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Andrew Roberts is the author of The Holy Fox: A Biography of Lord Halifax, *published in London by Weidenfeld and Nicolson.*

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America's putative no-deals-with-terrorists policy. She was obviously genuinely shocked when she caught the man she trusted negotiating with hostage-takers and behaving in a way one has come to expect only of the French.

The blurb-writer at Bodley Head, the book's British publisher, promised us new information from Smith as to what the Queen thought of Ronald Reagan. Unfortunately this is not forthcoming, so shall I supply one example from the time of the Reagans' first visit to Windsor Castle in June 1982. It was decided that the Queen and President would go riding together in the Park. This was as much a splendid photo-opportunity for the press as it was a nightmare for the security people. When the Queen saw the plan to have up to a dozen security men riding on either side of them she remarked testily, "I'm going out for a ride with a friend, we're not trying to rustle up a posse."

It is said that Mrs. Thatcher now calls Reagan's Reykjavik call for a non-nuclear world "the only real divergence we ever had." If so, she has overlooked her denunciation of the United States's invasion of the Commonwealth island of Grenada in 1983. Although the point is not raised by Smith, there is reason to believe that she privately supported Reagan's attack, but such was the outrage of establishment figures, including the Queen herself, at the United States's attacking a country of the British Commonwealth that the Prime Minister thought discretion the better part of Atlanticist valor. As in so many things until the advent of the poll tax, her instincts were correct.

It was when Reagan was left alone with his instincts, when he was denouncing the Evil Empire and threatening to bomb Russia in five minutes that he was at his best. At Reykjavik, his call for a non-nuclear world was an example not of hopeless optimism, nor even of cynicism, but merely of the Great Communicator trying it on. In her very British way, Mrs. Thatcher made the mistake of taking him seriously.

It is this readiness of the British to take people at their word which causes endless difficulties in the European Community. There, the French, Italian, and Belgian trade ministers blithely promise one thing, do the opposite, and leave their British counterpart nonplussed, bewildered, and blamed for holding up progress. Although the Reykjavik pronouncement, which on any logical reading turned forty years of NATO policy on its head, sent Mrs. Thatcher into paroxysms, all she ought to have done was just laugh it off as one giant sound-bite. The incident showed Reagan being typically Reagan and Thatcher quintessentially Thatcher. The rest of us should be happy and proud that they were so. □

THE RIDDLE OF POWER: PRESIDENTIAL LEADERSHIP FROM TRUMAN TO BUSH

Robert Shogan/Dutton/352 pp. $21.95

Fred Barnes

As a judge of Presidents, Bob Shogan has the same problem as James David Barber: bad timing. Barber, a political science professor at Duke, came out with *The Presidential Character* just as Jimmy Carter was becoming President. Barber had chatted with Carter and was dazzled. I can't explain that; maybe a cloud passed over Durham. Anyway, according to Barber's scheme for analyzing Presidents, Carter was destined for greatness. Whoops. With Bush, Shogan errs on the negative side. In foreign affairs, he says, George Bush's prospects are "dubious." In coping with the post–Cold War world, Bush "appeared driven by short-term, narrow considerations rather than any total overview."

Shogan wrote before the air and land war against Iraq crowned Bush's foreign policy with a shimmering triumph. There's no way Shogan could have known this would happen, right? How could anyone have guessed that Bush would perform so marvelously? I certainly didn't. It's an excusable misjudgment, and it's one of the few things I'd argue with in this provocative yet fair-minded book. Shogan, the top political reporter of the *Los Angeles Times*, is willing to ignore the liberal conventional wisdom. I submit his list of post-FDR Presidents who've achieved at least some success and those who haven't. The successes are Harry Truman, John Kennedy, Richard Nixon, and Ronald Reagan. The duds are Dwight Eisenhower, Lyndon Johnson, Gerald Ford, and Jimmy Carter. Shogan doesn't offer a final verdict on Bush. He'll be free to revise his preliminary assessment later, when Bush's term is finished—or not revise it.

No, Shogan hasn't entirely solved the riddle of why some Presidents do well and others fail. But he has a useful method for measuring and explaining presidential performance. He sees three controlling elements of presidential power: ideology, values, character. Okay, these are very broad categories, especially in Shogan's hands. For example, he describes LBJ's thirst for consensus as an ideology. That's a stretch. Still, the scheme works well enough as a tool for revealing the roots of success or failure in the White House. Shogan suggests that if a President is badly deficient in one of the three elements of the presidency, he's likely to run into serious trouble. He cites Carter, a man whose personal values and character were adequate. His ideology wasn't. In fact, he had no ideology, which meant he was adrift. He satisfied practically no one, and failed as a leader.

Let's deal with the successes first. Shogan rates each according to his three-part scheme, and then shows how they held up in a moment of crisis. Truman certainly had an ideology: a bare-knuckles Cold War liberalism. His values were shaped by his view of himself as an underdog, a guy who had had to labor long and hard to get respect. "The key to Truman's character was his understanding of his own shortcomings and his ability to be honest with himself," adds Shogan. I'd have judged Truman by his leadership in saving Europe with the Truman Doctrine, Marshall Plan, and NATO. Shogan, though, says the election of 1948 was the telling challenge, and Truman met it with courage and resourcefulness. "He thus preserved for some time to come FDR's Grand Coalition," Shogan writes. Too true.

Kennedy gets better marks from Shogan than I'd have given him. He was a pragmatist in ideology, a rationalist in values, and self-determined in character. Challenged in the Cuban missile crisis, Kennedy understood it "as mainly a political rather than a military problem." Kennedy got the Soviet missiles out of Cuba and averted military conflict, giving up only U.S. missiles in Turkey that were supposedly going to come out anyway. Shogan raises the matter of Kennedy's sexual promiscuity, which clashed so obviously with the self-control he showed in other aspects of his life. It "contravened the qualities of moralism and idealism that he purported to represent." That's putting it mildly. Shogan concludes that Kennedy's "sexual athleticism" didn't interfere with his presidential duties or cloud his judgment during the missile crisis. Yeah, sure.

The essay on Nixon is the best in the book. Shogan says Nixon's achievement was to thwart the antiwar movement and gradually (rather than precipitously) withdraw from Vietnam, while pursuing diplomacy with the Soviet Union and China. Doing all this at once was a deft trick. I was no fan of détente or of pandering to Mao. But in hindsight, Nixon gave up little and got the country over the hump at a time when it (or at least its opinion elite) had lost its nerve. Nixon, says Shogan, attempted to polarize the nation, and succeeded.

Fred Barnes is a senior editor of the New Republic.

"Freedom is as little lost in a day as won in a day."—Edmund Burke

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His goal was to create a middle-class constituency for his policies, and he figured that "the enmity of the war protesters would help solidify the support of the middle class." He was right, and the antiwar movement never quite recovered. But Nixon paid a high price. The left got its revenge in Watergate.

Shogan gives Reagan credit for a "half revolution." His tax and budget cuts of 1981 were a triumph, but "he was unable to exploit the historic opportunity created by the early impetus of the Reagan Revolution." I'd agree with that. "Reagan's unwillingness to confront the cost of entitlements contributed to the deficits that cast a long shadow over the nation he had governed," says Shogan. Well, maybe a short shadow. He also insists that Reagan "compounded problems that middle-class Americans had to confront—drugs, the homeless, the accelerating collapse of the cities." I don't buy that. But, remember, Shogan gives Reagan credit for tackling the economic mess—inflation, slow growth—that Carter left behind. Not only did Reaganomics work, but also, in foreign policy, "Reagan succeeded to a significant degree in meeting the challenge he took on." Not bad.

What about the flops? Eisenhower was too inclined to lead by indirection, says Shogan, and failed to provide strong moral direction during the fight over school desegregation. Johnson was so caught up in maintaining a consensus that he couldn't bring himself to choose between arms and butter, between fighting a war and pushing the Great Society. Ford couldn't explain to Shogan's satisfaction why he pardoned Nixon. (He satisfied me.) Carter was self-absorbed to the point of making himself the center of the hostage drama in 1980.

Now, here's what the lesson of this book ought to be for conservatives: in politics and public policy, ideology isn't enough. True, having no ideology at all doesn't work either. But conservatives already knew that. The Reagan case is instructive. Shogan notes his "ability to maintain hard-line ideological positions without causing outrage except among his most dedicated enemies. His genial smile, his soft voice, his apt analogy, all [took] the threatening edge" off his pronouncements and policies. "This facility," Shogan argues, "was a function of Reagan's character, which, like his values, greatly bolstered his ideology and leadership." Reagan exploited his own personality and the acting tricks he'd picked up. He became quite skilled at drumming up support for conservative positions from folks who don't think of themselves as conservatives. There's a name for this ability—leadership. □

ONE OF US: RICHARD NIXON AND THE AMERICAN DREAM

Tom Wicker/Random House/731 pp. $24.95

Matthew Scully

In Tom Wicker's *One of Us*, as in each of Richard Nixon's three autobiographical works, we encounter the familiar lines from Longfellow's "Psalm of Life," a quotation Nixon cherishes almost as much as the "man in the arena" imagery he so often borrows from Theodore Roosevelt. The poem had been etched by his Grandmother Milhous under a framed portrait of Lincoln that hung over his bed from age 13 until his departure for Duke Law School in 1934. Remember these words, the old Quaker woman told him, and one day you will find "peace at the center":

> Lives of great men oft remind us
> We can make our lives sublime,
> And, departing, leave behind us
> Footprints on the sands of time.

From one angle it makes a touching picture: the solitary, awkward boy yearning for attainments beyond the drudgery of his father's faltering grocery store/filling station; the son who watches his eldest and youngest brothers die lingering deaths from tuberculosis, resolving to live a "Life of Great Purpose" and leave his mark in the world; a young man who—as he recalled in *RN* and *In the Arena*—passed into adulthood without ever hearing the words "I love you." One need only think of young Lyndon Johnson engaging in the early deceits so absorbingly chronicled by Robert Caro in *Path to Power*, or young Jack Kennedy sauntering through the courts and resorts of Europe while the old man's staff prepared his term papers, to appreciate the grim perseverance by which Nixon emerged from a toilsome and unromantic childhood.

But from another angle one detects an emotional thread common to all three of them—that longing for center-stage which in our day so often turns affairs of state into a personal psychodrama. Nixon is the archetype of that common figure for whom politics is less a civic undertaking than a redemptive struggle. The boy orator Joe Biden tearfully recalling the sacrifices of his father, the poor Welsh miner; Senator Hartpence rewriting his name and himself; Mario Cuomo posing as Coriolanus, reluctantly heeding the call of the people and tormented by ethical subtleties that elude lesser statesmen—what underlies these pathetic melodramas but a yearning to stomp deep tracks into the "sands of time" for all to see? Certainly one does not observe among such men a great reserve of "peace at the center." Whatever their gifts, they seem, like Nixon, to need public service a good deal more than the public needs their services—though, unlike him, they bring to their "service" little of that nobility earned by real struggle.

One of Us brings out this nobility as well as any study to date. Leaving aside the bland subtitle and about 200 pages of detail on the SALT treaties, intricacies of the 1971 wage/price freeze, and whatnot, that could easily have been cut, it is a work of remarkable calm, grace, and, above all, charity. Wicker tells us that his curiosity about Nixon first arose late one evening in 1957 when, as a young reporter, he spotted the vice president walking down a Capitol corridor in his familiar slumped bearing:

> I concluded then only that I had glimpsed a profoundly unhappy man, for once unsheltered behind practical defenses; I was young and found it hard to fathom why a vice president, who could even become president, should appear so desolate, and so alone. . . . As a journalist active through most of the Nixon saga, I was more often his critic—in retrospect, not always knowledgeably—than his admirer. . . . [But] after my own struggles, disappointments and survival in the same decades, I consider him one of the two most interesting public men I have known. . . .

—the other being Landslide Lyndon.

There is a serene goodwill in this writing that does Wicker credit. Here and there, though, his fascination leads him a bit far, as when he speculates that Nixon has spent his life grappling with guilt for having forsaken his "saintly" mother's pacific ways in favor of his father's rancorous and partisan self-assertion. Nixon's deepest wish, he supposedly told an unnamed confidante during his congressional days, was to emerge from the "un-Quakerish betrayals of his political life and say: 'Mother, I have made peace. Now I am worthy of you.' " Is it too much to suggest, Wicker asks, that President Nixon's proclaimed plan for a "Structure of Peace" in Vietnam, his rapprochement with China, his travels to Moscow, were all part of his quest for maternal absolution?

Yes, it is suggesting too much, but applied in measure the information is useful. So also is a story Nixon himself has recounted—that upon Richard's return home from a year-long absence as a 13-year-old, his dying brother Arthur had to ask their mother for permission to greet Richard with a kiss. And that, despite excellent grades, Nixon had to settle for Whittier College because his family was too poor to accept a partial scholarship to Yale. And that in college he helped found the Orthogonians ("straight-shooters"), a club for those excluded from the snooty Franklin society. And that, as we'd expect, young Dick Nixon did not cut a dashing figure on the dance floor, and perhaps harbored into adulthood "an inner anger" because of his "low standing with the girls."

Far, in fact, from revealing any "inner anger," many of the stories reflect humility and an awkward gentleness, always apparent in Nixon's better moments. There's a nice story about how, several times in the early fifties, Nixon stood up for Robert Oppenheimer when the physicist's security clearance and loyalty were challenged—despite Nixon's reputation as a reckless maligner of poor innocent dissenters like Alger Hiss. And Wicker credits Nixon with having achieved more for the poor and disadvantaged than big-talking liberals, having himself grown up poor and "disadvantaged." (Alas, Wicker's measure of presidential achievement is that Nixon "left intact the Great Society.")

Nixon's peculiar humility (peculiar, at least, in a chronically insecure publicity hound) is reflected in a 1968 interview he gave to *Life*, in which he matter-of-factly noted that, in World War II, "I didn't get hit, or hit anyone; all I got was a case of fungus." Wicker notes that Fawn Brodie, a querulous and malevolent nag even by the standards of her fellow Nixon biographers, took this as an expression of Nixon's regret that he hadn't done any killing. But its real relevance is as a contrast between Nixon and his two immediate predecessors—Kennedy, given to dispensing those ridiculous *PT 109*-shaped tie clips to remind Oval Office visitors of his heroism; Johnson, an out-and-out fraud who in his campaign literature turned a congressional "fact-finding trip" in wartime into an Odyssean epic of courage and survival.

As for JFK, Wicker marvels that Nixon never challenged the 1960 returns, a "decision both personally unselfish and

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Matthew Scully is assistant literary editor of National Review.

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profoundly in the interest of the country and the president-elect." Wicker writes: "There's no doubt that he almost won; it may even be that he did win." He had won the prize, "only to see it snatched away by the kind of privileged and advantaged man who represented in his person Nixon's worst nightmares about his own inadequacy." Citing Kennedy's dismissive remark—"Nixon doesn't know who he is and went out as he came in: no class"—Wicker writes:

This was a good if not particularly original insight into Nixon from a man who clearly knew who he himself was—though not always: the Kennedy who supported Nixon against Helen Douglas, who was reluctant to condemn Joe McCarthy and who exaggerated his claims to have written *Why England Slept* and *Profiles in Courage*, may not have known himself so well as the Kennedy who ran for president in 1960 seemed to. Kennedy, moreover, had the advantage of a quite different upbringing and life experience, but still had his own calculations, maneuverings, dark spots and tasteless moments—particularly with women—to answer for.

From his desk at the *New York Times* on Election Day 1960, Wicker watched managing editor Turner Catledge pacing about and wishing aloud "that a certain midwestern mayor would steal enough votes to pull Kennedy through." The wish was "not serious," we're assured, though as it happened a certain Midwestern mayor came through, and offhand one doesn't recall any stunning *Times* investigative pieces or Watergate-scale books on *The Stolen Election of 1960*.

Then there's a reminder of just how Nixon became, as Wicker describes him, so darned "paranoiac." Averell Harriman, the quintessential "Franklin" type, arrives at a Georgetown party in 1951 and, spotting Nixon sitting alone in a corner, loudly announces: "I won't sit with that man!" The source of this disdain: Nixon had used "unseemly" tactics to beat Harriman's friend Helen Gahagan Douglas in their recent Senate race. Read on a bit to Wicker's account of the 1968 presidential election, and there's old "Av" the highminded statesman pleading with President Johnson to contrive a "major breakthrough" in the Vietnam negotiations—*any breakthrough*—to push Humphrey ahead before Election Day. And indeed the dramatic diplomatic initiative was duly announced, but too late.

Whether, in the end, all this adds up to the "sublime" life promised by Longfellow and Grandmother Milhous, to "peace at the center," one cannot say. At its best, it has been a story of will, and a strange grandeur—as in that final defiant wave from the helicopter on August 9, 1974; at its lowest, it is a story of needless compromise and surrender to the drama of the moment—as in those effusive and self-abasing toasts to Mao in Peking. The central fact of the saga, writes Wicker admiringly, is that Richard Nixon succeeded in his "long, lonely search for the Grail."

True enough, but it is always a little depressing to read of a politician's quest for "the Grail," or for that matter to find religious imagery applied to any purely political pursuit. Such fervor makes for compelling spectacle, but ends in messianic absurdity, like the post-assassination editorials and sermons that explained how Kennedy had "expiated" our national sins in Dallas. Politics isn't supposed to bring us Grails or expiation or "peace at the center." If anything, the politically preoccupied—not only the seekers of "the Grail" but those who chase after them with recorders and notepads—seem to be rushing in just the opposite direction. □

PROFILES

Kenneth Tynan/HarperCollins/437 pp. $29.95

R. J. Stove

Kenneth Peacock Tynan reversed the Two Literary Ages of Man. The typical writer begins in high school, when he scribbles effusions that would disgrace a lavatory wall, and only after years of grueling apprenticeship attains (if he is lucky) brilliance. Tynan started off brilliant, and only after years of grueling apprenticeship did he descend to the level of a lavatory wall.

Compare what tripe the rest of us furtively confided to notebooks at sixteen—the tenth-rate Dylan Thomas, the bargain-basement Rimbaud, the all-too-plausible attempts at out-self-pitying Sylvia Plath—with what Tynan was producing at the same age (this from an obituary of Alexander Woollcott):

[He] was an all-embracing, non-respecting, joy-loving genius; a great dramatic critic, a brilliant wit, "full of subtile flame," a teller of unmatched short stories, and the most expert of feuilletonists, he was the omnipresent pivot of literary and theatrical life in the seething, sky-scraping metropolis that is New York City. His fine and illuminated intellect grasped, held, and assessed; little indeed was beyond his wit, the wise and jetting laughter of a corkscrew of a brain. . . . As *maître de salon*, too, he was supreme. Clad in insecure egg-stained pyjamas, he would preside over an animated crowd of backgammon-playing, talking and eating guests. . . . They were noisy, joyful assemblies; and memorable, too, even if only for Alec himself, crooning in some ghastly baby language: "EVWY day my pwayers I say, I learn my lessons EVWY day"—until his opponent happened to throw double sixes, whereupon he would scream a shrill and profane imprecation in tones of apparently ungovernable fury. . . .

One's first reaction is to assume that chronological skullduggery is afoot, that an unscrupulous veteran of letters is trying to palm off a brand-new essay as the fruit of his prodigious youth. Not so: the Woollcott elegy appeared (in Tynan's school magazine!) in July 1943, and Tynan was born April 2, 1927. Sure, a diligent editor might have blue-penciled a few of Tynan's wilder metaphors and shortened the occasional sentence; yet, even as he did so, he would have been shaking his head in teeth-gritted wonder at an adolescent capable of authoritatively using words like "feuilletonists" and "imprecation."

Perhaps it was inevitable that an English boy who could write this well should shine as a student at Oxford; it is more surprising that Tynan, far from being a case of early burnout, became one of the few Oxford graduates ever to experience fame after his graduation. Endowed with tons of charm charm, a hypnotic stammer, and a prose style that at its best practically glowed in the dark, Tynan soon emerged as Britain's best drama critic since Max Beerbohm. It is a mystery that London playhouses managed to attract any audiences whatever during Tynan's reviewing reign, because the performances given in the theater at an opening night were liable to furnish much less entertainment than the performances Tynan gave on the printed page the following morning. (The first publisher who has the brains to reissue Tynan's quotidian critiques in book form will earn a zillion dollars: with any luck, the present profiles—largely magazine rather than newspaper journalism—could sell well enough to make such a reissue possible.) Why would anyone read or attend *Titus Andronicus*, notoriously Shakespeare's most awful play (if indeed Shakespeare wrote it), in preference to perusing Tynan's description of Vivien Leigh exacerbating its awfulness?

As Lavinia, Vivien Leigh received the news that she is about to be ravished on her husband's corpse with little more than the mild annoyance of one who would have preferred foam rubber.

What in Marlowe is more memorable than Tynan's summary of Marlowe's *Tamburlaine* as "an orgy of sadism by the light of meteors"? And how many theatergoers, recollecting the last vile updated version of a classic they were forced to sit through—*Macbeth* transplanted to El Salvador, say, or Congreve's *The Way of the World* reset in a Paris nightclub—will be able to suppress three hearty cheers at Tynan's great epigram "They were dressed to kill, and what they were dressed to kill was the play"? (These *bons mots* were mild by Tynan's standards. Orson Welles's *Othello* goaded him into his most publicized and lethal one-liner: "Citizen Coon.")

Tynan, a leftist, never permitted his politics to serve as an excuse for incompetent or otherwise unreadable writing; present-day pressure-groups can draw no comfort from him. Tynan's attitude was of the refreshing, old-fashioned sort visible in the 1950s *New Statesman*, which took it for granted, as did 1950s Britain in general, that leftists could not only construct grammatical sentences but also, on occasion, write poems that rhymed and scanned.

Nor was this the sole aspect of Tynan's character that would incense today's Chattering Classes. For example, Tynan died—in 1980—of emphysema caused by willful and unabashed chain-smoking. (Imagine a chain-smoker being allowed to hold court in chic restaurants these days.) Furthermore, he repeatedly visited Franco's Spain, simply in order to relish its bullfights, on which he wrote with a bloodlust unsurpassed since Old-Bull-in-the-Afternoon Hemingway. But cigarettes and bullfights could not distract Tynan from expounding his deepest rent-a-crowd convictions: the boundless wickedness of censorship, South Vietnam, World War I, and capitalism; combined with the equally boundless blessings of Lenny Bruce, Bertolt Brecht, proletarians, and erotic liberation. (*His* erotic liberation, that is. Let one of Tynan's wives or mistresses so much as contemplate making whoopee with someone else, and Tynan would have to be physically restrained.) The proudest boast in his *Who's Who* entry was not of his palpable journalistic achievements but of his having been the first person to use the F-word on British TV.

Matters carnal eventually dominated his thought to the virtual exclusion of other topics. Nineteen sixty-nine witnessed the first session of his musical *Oh! Calcutta!*, complete with nude cast; its title was a labored pun on the

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R. J. Stove writes for National Review, *the* Weekend Australian, *and* Quadrant.

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French phrase *Oh! quel cul t'as.* Tynan's expertise did not extend to showbiz law, and thus he made less money from *Oh! Calcutta!* than did any of his subordinates. A sequel, *Carte Blanche*—"tat for tit," *Punch* derisively called it—inflicted still more financial damage on its creator. Ever the optimist, he planned to recoup his losses by writing a pornographic movie script, only to discover that his own mighty efforts in effecting the permissive Utopia had ensured a lamentable oversupply of the very product he was now trying to sell. By the late 1970s he seemed more of a bad joke than anything else: ardently and unsuccessfully endeavoring to ascertain the Masturbation Fantasies of the Rich and Famous (with a view to publishing them in book form), ritually flogging the girls foolish enough to take up with him, and apt to sing the praises of Wilhelm Reich to any hearer who had not crossed the street first. At his death, the biography of Reich with which he was going to stun mankind remained unfinished, a fact that inspired regret in absolutely no one.

Most pornophiles are cradle-to-grave losers. Tynan had the talent to be a cradle-to-grave winner, but he chose to destroy himself as spectacularly as Yukio Mishima did, while lacking even the decisiveness and physical valor which lent a suggestion of dignity to Mishima's horrible end. It is a sobering experience to read Tynan's *Profiles*, and not just the ones that amaze by their author's precocity. Early or late, these tributes to the sacred monsters that peopled Tynan's imagination—from James Cagney to James Thurber; from Gielgud to Greta Garbo via Graham Greene; from Miles Davis to Mel Brooks via Marlene Dietrich—are sane and sharp. They are not crammed with aphorisms, as Tynan's theater reviews were, though his comparison of Charles Laughton's gait to that of "a salmon standing on his tail" and his account of Noel Coward "baring his teeth as if unveiling a grotesque memorial" are unforgettable. Yet the profiles are uniformly enriching, at times poignant: there is any amount of appropriate desolation in the pieces on Graham Greene and Tennessee Williams.

As for Tynan the industrious hater, he appears at his most devastating in a 1966 analysis of Humphrey Bogart written for *Playboy*:

> I have now read about eighty-three accounts of him, in magazines or books, and I still cannot find it in me to be mesmerized by Bogart the Man. Successful hard-drinking iconoclasts who can't act frequently express the same opinions as successful hard-drinking iconoclasts who can (such as Bogart). To hate phonies and prize loyalty is a fairly common attribute, even among the untalented. And on every other page of the Bogart dossiers there are tributes from colleagues that bring me out in a sweat of incredulous embarrassment.

With characteristic originality, Tynan then turns the tables on every reader who assumes that the foregoing presages a hate-Bogart tract:

> If I seem to knock the cult of Bogart the Man, it is because I invented the cult of Bogart the Actor. . . . Aged ten, I saw [*The Petrified Forest*] when it opened in Britain, and immediately wrote a letter to a movie magazine, begging Warner's to give us more of this untamed man with the warning eyes and the rasping voice. It was my debut in print.

That is Tynan all over. He could be obnoxious with the best of them, but his compliments were as fiery and as imperious as his insults. If one knew nothing about him except what these profiles reveal, one would take him for an eminently sensible pyrotechnician. Surely Tynan realized what excellence his most searching articles had reached? No, he didn't. How else to explain his metamorphosis into a creature that future paleontologists will know as Tynanosaurus Sex: predatory, dumb, and very extinct. □

NANCY REAGAN: THE UNAUTHORIZED BIOGRAPHY

Kitty Kelley/Simon and Schuster/603 pp. $24.95

Peter Hannaford

Kitty Kelley enjoys deep kissing with goats. That is what her late cleaning lady said the window washer told her. She said he said he witnessed it through the bedroom window. The cleaning lady told her cousin (or at least a woman claiming to be her cousin) who told me.

Not bad, if I may say so myself. Okay, I made the story up, but only to illustrate how easy it is to mimic the research methods used by Kitty Kelley in compiling her gossip-and-venom-filled volume on the former First Lady. Her mastery of salacious innuendo will send the supermarket tabloid industry back to the drawing board. At one point, for instance, she drags in, for no apparent purpose, a discussion of lesbianism at Smith College back in the forties, when—pow!—she connects: "A secret but romantic 'best friends' relationship developed between Nancy Davis [Reagan] and a classmate who later became an avowed lesbian."

Already the stuff of folklore is Kelley's suggestion that Mrs. Reagan and Frank Sinatra were carrying on in the White House. Too bad everyone also knows that this bit of speculation is recycled from her earlier book on Sinatra. She describes Sinatra as coming in by a back door (find me one at the White House!) for what she calls, in quotation marks, "luncheons," just to make sure we'll know they weren't. Her source for the lowdown is—ah, too bad—anonymous. The relentless author remains coy: "I take the reader to the bedroom door of the First Family's living quarters. I did not go into the bedroom. I did not interview Mr. Sinatra, nor did I interview Mrs. Reagan. I can only tell you what transpired up to that point." Lady, I don't think you can tell us anything.

When one has been in the public eye for much of four decades, a personage like Nancy Reagan will have, no doubt, a number of people eager to redress real or imagined slights. Kelley exploits any such differences in order to present a woman who is power-mad, vain, conniving, and without a single redeeming quality. The book is so wildly overstated as to make the subject unrecognizable to those who actually know her.

Kelley seems desperate to be taken as a serious historian. In the round of interviews and parties during the initial promotion of the book, she repeatedly claimed to have conducted more than one thousand interviews for the book. Kelley lists the names of these alleged sources in the book's acknowledgments, yet with every day the number grows of those who, having learned they are named as sources, deny they ever talked with the author or her assistants.

Would-be historian Kelley slipped when she told the *Washington Times*, "This is the best journalism there is. It's all [documented] in the back of the book." Since her scholarly text contains no footnote notations (how convenient), this documentation turns out to be forty-two pages of "notes," organized by chapter and presented in long batches containing even gamier material than appears in the main body of the work.

A Kelley fact is at best a factoid. She takes a kernel of truth, embroiders it with supposition, and then draws a weird conclusion. To take one example involving this reviewer: Discussing Ronald Reagan's final year as California governor (1974), Kelley writes: "[Mrs. Reagan] encouraged Michael Deaver and Peter Hannaford to leave their families in northern California and move to Los Angeles to start a political consulting firm with Reagan as their main client. . . . So Deaver and Hannaford lived together during the week in a one-bedroom apartment in Brentwood and on weekends commuted to their families in the north."

True, except for a few "details": The idea of managing a post-governorship program for Mr. Reagan originated with Mike Deaver and me over a period of several months in 1974. We proposed it to the Reagans in October of that year. Our firm was established as a public relations/public affairs firm, not as a political consultancy. As we had enough capital to staff only one major office, we chose Los Angeles, where our most active client would be located. Our initial plan was to take turns working three and two days a week in Los Angeles. But because the business grew, we soon were working in Los Angeles (or on the road) all week most weeks. To meet these growing demands on our time, we took an apartment—in Santa Monica, not Brentwood; two bedrooms, not one. It wasn't, in other words, a manipulative Nancy Reagan who kept us from our families, but a combination of business decisions and coincidences.

One can only speculate about the author's motives. She would have us believe that Ronald Reagan spent his eight years in the White House as a puppet to an all-powerful wife (except when she was "lunching" with Frank Sinatra). This view was taken seriously by some members of the press, including one in the *Los Angeles Times*, who may have inadvertently hit upon the book's underlying motive when he said the book "deals yet another blow to [Mr. Reagan's] place in history." Fat chance. Perhaps someday our journalists will learn that, what with their deadlines and short horizons, they rarely affect the judgments of history.

Meanwhile, to anyone who knows the Reagans or was there, the Kelley scenario can only appear laughable. Kelley is said to have received a $3-4 million advance from value-free Simon and Schuster, who also happen to be the publishers of Mr. Reagan's recent memoirs. Sounds like they've become the latest practitioners of the "greed" unleashed by Reaganism. □

Peter Hannaford, author of The Reagans: A Political Portrait, *is head of a Washington-based public affairs firm.*

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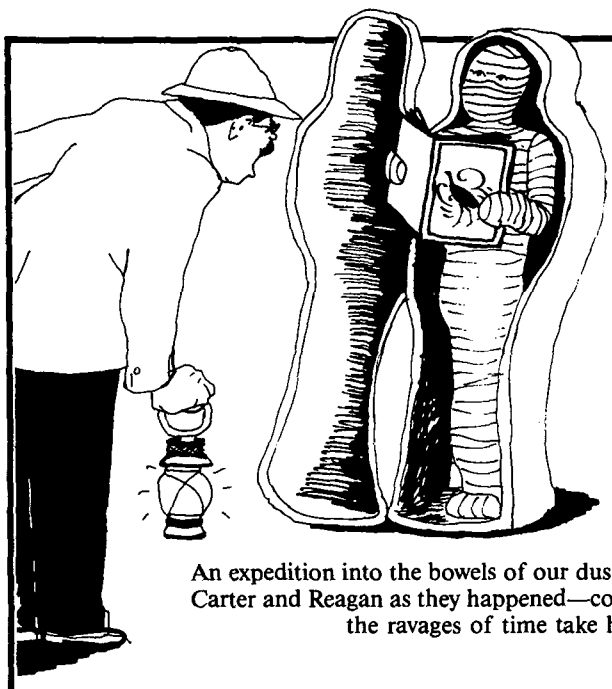

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CURRENT WISDOM

New York Times

Once again, the eternal schoolmarm yells out from the vacuity that is Anthony Lewis:

Something is missing in George Bush. An empathy gene, if there were such a thing. An instinctive response to the pain of other human beings. An internal monitor that tells him when political calculation has to stop, yielding to concern for decency. . . . Abroad, as at home, doing right can be more helpful to a President than focusing on politics. Mr. Bush is a highly intelligent man, and he surely should be able to see that. A friend should tell him: George, you've made it. You're President. Act like it.

[April 15, 1991]

San Francisco Chronicle

The first two paragraphs and the last paragraph of a column by Mr. Bob Wieder, apparently a student of the Dukakis school of political humor:

If not out of respect for our fighting men and women, then at least out of respect for the English language, take a stand against a growing tendency to reduce the Mideast war to Gulfspeak. Join me in pledging the following oath.

I will not use the phrase "the mother of all" to describe head colds, keg parties, business deals, poker games, utility bills, hangovers, or fights with my spouse or lover. When I see or hear commercials in which actors moan, "I've got the mother of all headaches/heartburn/hemorrhoids/etc.," I will boycott those products. . . .

War is hell. War-born cliches are hell made banal.

[March 15, 1991]

New York Times

Shady cerebrations on the op-ed page of a great American daily the morning after lunatics commandeered the computers and went hog wild:

For years, TV and movies have presented us—light skinned blacks like myself, and my darker brothers and sisters—with images of recognizable blacks that don't ring true. This is the result of insensitivity on the part of producers who fail to acknowledge that our skin color ranges from ebony to dark brown to light brown to almost white—something that the nearly 30 million African Americans are acutely aware of.

The lack of attention to shades of skin color when choosing black actors to play historical figures was led by the casting of Cicely Tyson—in history's worst make-up job, a ludicrous skin lightener—as Coretta Scott King. This so disconcerted many people that they told me they found it difficult to focus on the show.

The same film, which chronicled the life of the Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King Jr., also featured Howard Rollins Jr., who is dark, as the much lighter Rev. Andrew Young.

[April 6, 1991]

Los Angeles Times

A grim reminder of the social benefits of government-supplied Valium for the gals of Laguna Beach:

I don't do this lightly. I am canceling my subscription to the *Los Angeles Times*. I have been a Sunday subscriber for years, primarily because of the Book Review section.

On Sunday morning, Feb. 3, after reeling from "the white feminists of today who have their own black spokespeople" [Ishmael Reed's review of "Frederick Douglass," Feb. 3], I realized how routine the feminist-hating has become and I thought: I'm paying out my hard-earned money to be assaulted.

The loss of a feminist reader will not be felt, although the production of a newspaper that cannot be read by women who value themselves raises some interesting free-speech issues.

The absence of feminist insight from the pages of a "thinking person's" journal, however, means there is nothing new about the news, that there are no new stories, only endless repetitions of an old one. Man lusts and thinks and dreams and hurts and idolizes and and suffers; the world is his stage, and all that is not-man—space and Earth, women and children—are props for his performance.

There is a smell of stale semen about the story. I want no part of it.

—Diane R. Holman
Laguna Beach

[March 10, 1991]

Washington Post

Michael Kinsley, everyone's candidate for teacher's pet, makes a point that apparently can never be repeated too frequently about the shocking 1980s and does so with his usual gaiety and fey insight:

There is no entry on "hair" in the index to Lou Cannon's fat new book on the Reagan presidency. Nor in Reagan's own recent autobiography. So we must rely on Kitty Kelley. . . . The key reference is on page 292. "Whenever he visited the White House to color the First Lady's hair, Julius also dyed the President's gray roots, which he had been doing secretly since 1968."

This revelation might strike most people as less interesting than Kelley's allegation that Nancy was canoodling with Jerry Lewis on the desk of the Oval Office. (Have I got that right?) But many will find it a good deal more plausible. A small matter, perhaps. But you can read the saga of Ronald Reagan's hair as a metaphor for the 1980s, a time when deceit by public officials reached new levels of respectability. Reagan set a new standard of brazen duplicity of which George Bush and future presidents are the beneficiaries.

[April 11, 1991]

San Francisco Chronicle

The Jonathan Swift of Ukiah makes another witty point:

What's all this fuss about a gang of LAPD officers savagely beating up one black, convicted criminal? These officers are true heroes in the "new world order" tradition of "kicking butt." We sing anthems in praise of international law enforcement as we welcome our Air Force home for having done to citizens in Iraq—on a much grander scale—what the LAPD routinely does to citizens at home. Why do we now threaten these honorable police officers with prosecution?

President Bush would be ashamed of Police Chief Daryl Gates' wimpy failure to back up his soldiers on the thin blue line. Either the LAPD lawmen and the returning troops are murderous thugs or they're all heroes: we'd like to have it both ways, but we can't. Criticizing the LAPD for emulating Stormin' Norman Schwarzkopf's law enforcement philosophy smacks of a crude and cynical double standard: it suggests that Americans will not permit at home what we so proudly do to Third World citizens abroad.

—Richard L. Huff
Ukiah

[March 13, 1991]

Modesto Bee

The *farfelu* ramblings of Dr. Helen Caldicott, the Australian crank strutting before 500 intellectualoids at famed Stanislaus State University, somewhere in California:

She said everything from the bombs manufactured by multinational corporations to the packaging on the products plays a part in the Earth's gradual death. Paper packaging, made of wood pulp, requires the killing of trees. That in turn accelerates the "greenhouse" effect and the depletion of the ozone layer, Caldicott said. The thinner the layer, the higher the incidence of skin cancers.

"Next time you go to the store, put the eggs in the basket and the onions in the basket and just leave all the packages strewed all over the checkout counter. Invite CBS television along to have a look. I have a feeling if you start doing that with a few friends, you'll be on the cover of *Time* magazine. Start a revolution against packaging in this country because packaging is just one of the things that is destroying the Earth."

The list of ills is lengthy. Plastics are produced with toxics that pollute the water we drink and the air we breathe, she said. Overpopulation puts added stress on every aspect of life; even recycling will not answer the problems of a wasteful society, Caldicott said.

Caldicott said solar energy research should be mandatory, abortion available to everyone, and education and medical care free to all the world's people. Governments must build mass transit, she said.

[March 15, 1991]

Washington Post

A cautionary tale on the perils of Atwaterism, piously boomed on the *Post*'s front page after a crack reporter discovers forlorn in a homeless shelter, John F. King, former "conservative" genius and "GOP Wunderkind":

He thinks about Atwater a lot these days. Just as he saw himself like Atwater at the zenith of his career, he said, he now sees parallels at the nadir. Just as a dying Atwater came to regret some of what he had done, King said, he too now rues his past.

People, he said, were just numbers to him, things to be manipulated in order to win. Homelessness, racism, poverty and drug addiction were just abstract issues; they didn't involve real people. "I wanted to be Henry Thoreau as a kid," he remembered. "I ended up being George Patton with a little Marquis de Sade thrown in for character."

Now, he said, his views are radically different. Although he still considers himself a conservative on some issues, he said, he believes that economic racism locks many blacks into a prison of poverty. With a grim laugh, he remembers the old saying, "We have met the enemy and he is us."

"That's one of the things that keeps running through my mind," he said. "I was involved in politics. I was in a position to help change things. And I just used things."

[April 19, 1991]

New York Times

An inscrutable interlude with another 1960s nutball:

Joni Mitchell—the woman who exalted the hippie culture of 20 years ago in the countercultural anthem "Woodstock"—is not especially sentimental about the 60s. One night recently, at a post-concert dinner party at which she, Sting, Bruce Springsteen and Don Henley shared a table, a young man approached and started waxing romantic about the 60s.

"I told him, 'Don't be romantic about it—we failed,' " she recalled. "And he said, 'Well, at least you tried.' And I said, 'But we didn't try hard enough. We didn't learn from history. If any progress is to be made, we must show you how we failed.' "

In tracing her own artistic growth in the past 20 years, Ms. Mitchell uses metaphors drawn from American Indian mythology, in which the four points of the compass represent different ways of perceiving the world.

"At the time of 'Blue,' I was very west, which is emotion, and as a result I couldn't communicate with the northeast, which is more rational and business oriented," she said. "I had no defenses. I would look at the business people and burst into tears. They had to lock me up to make that record. There's a purity in 'Blue' that comes from an almost-nothing-left-to-lose attitude. After that I had to grow some claws to survive, which means I had to develop my northeast and become more emotionally detached."

[March 17, 1991]

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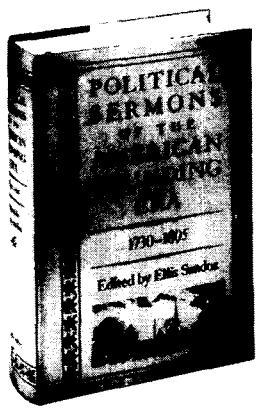

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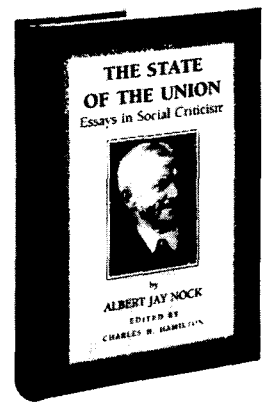

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